

THE INNIS HERALD

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Photo courtesy of Hayley Vlcek

Orientation Recap

Emma Paulus

INNIS LIFE

Last month, incoming students were welcomed through our annual orientation. Only this year, due to COVID-19, Innis Orientation was held entirely through online synchronous programming. The Orientation Executive Team worked throughout the summer to prepare for the event. Under the leadership of the Orientation Coordinators, Al-Amin Ahamed and Breanna Lima Martinez, the team was able to work together to make orientation the success that it was. One of the executives, Winsy Leung, commented on the way her sub-committee worked to ensure student engagement: “We focused on social media posts and giveaways for promotions!” She also added that, “Even with all the planning and preparation we were still worried that students wouldn’t attend, or that it would be really hard for students to socialize. But it turns out, having events online actually allowed first years to interact with other incoming students and the orientation team more!”

Story continues on Page 2

Orientation

Inside
this issue...

**COVID-19
Refugees**

12

**UFable:
Club Hub**

3

**Notorious
RBG**

17

**Innis Choir
Online**

6

**Pumpkin
Pie Recipe**

29



This year's orientation theme was "IN Your Element." The students, leaders, and executives were split into the four elements: earth, fire, water and air. The events had titles based on the Avatar: *The Last Airbender* franchise; the opening ceremonies were titled, "The Boy in the Iceberg" and the game was titled, "The Boy Who Cried Wolfbat," which is a play on the game title "The Boy Who Cried Wolf." Students were able to earn points for their element during many of the activities, which added an additional level of engagement from the first-year students. At the end of orientation, Earth, the element with the most points, earning 2006, was announced and celebrated by everyone. What was

especially exciting about this year's point system was that the difference between the first place and fourth place teams was only 195 points. This goes to show how involved all of the attending first-year students were throughout orientation.

Despite the challenge of having to reformat orientation to fit an online setting, the orientation team did an excellent job of planning events that were exciting and engaging. Many events that are traditionally held every year, such as the academic panels and clubs fair, were still able to run successfully online. The anonymous nature of comments and questions made the panel events more engaging than in the past. Herald's House, which is usually held in the form of an open mic night, was held in collaboration with Woodsworth College, and was altered so that students could submit videos of themselves performing any talent they wanted. This allowed there to be much more variety in the participants, with students singing, playing instruments, and baking, among other talents. The comment section was full of students hyping up each



Innis Orientation 2020 executive team posing with heart hand gestures in Microsoft Teams after a fruitful three days of online orientation programming.

submission. The orientation team also came up with new events that fit the online format well. Events such as a speech and quiz show game hosted by keynote speaker Adam Growe from Cash Cab Canada, and "University: What a Drag!?", the Q&A event with contestants from Drag Race Canada, were exciting new additions to the schedule.

Although it was different from past years in many ways, online orientation was widely considered to be a success. One first year student, Jake Pereira, said, "I was genuinely surprised at how well

I thought it went super well considering it was the first ever online orientation the we had to plan. — Winsy Leung

put together and organized the whole thing was. Stuff like wolverine and bingo were actually really fun (plus we got a lot of free stuff and I love free stuff). I made a few friends through orientation as well, so I think that means it was an overall success." Kassie Neckles, one of the Orientation Captains, said, "While this orientation was unprecedented in its mode of operation and was largely remote, it was no less interactive and fun. I think the fact that the events were able to run so smoothly despite none of us actually seeing each other in person is a testament of the true spirit and hospitable nature of the Innis College community."

Winsy Leung also commented on the outcome of orientation, saying, "I thought it went super well considering it was the first ever online orientation that we had to plan. There was a lot of brainstorming between the executives on how to get students to engage and actually attend the online orientation... it turns out, having events online actually allowed first years to interact with other incoming students and the orientation team more! I think it is

because when orientation is in person, incoming students mostly interact with people in their group, while the [executives] work mostly behind the scenes. I noticed that students were more willing to socialize through chat or using their mic. Overall I think the turnout for orientation was amazing and it's great to see all our hard work paid off at the end."

Al-Amin Ahamed, one of the Orientation Coordinators, commented on the experience of planning orientation this year, saying, "Orientation posed some unique challenges this year, not only in its unprecedented nature but also in its unpredictability. Having to structure a new executive team, develop a Quercus course shell and transition into a completely online experience was completely new and daunting to us at first. However, all of this was a good learning opportunity that taught us the importance of working as a team, making difficult decisions, and developing strong branding. While not under ideal circumstances, orientation was quite successful as we were able to experiment with a bunch of different events that ended up paying off. With over 200 participants, our quiz show with Adam Growe was entertaining and set the tone for an interactive and engaging online experience. Integrating drag superstars from Canada's Drag Race was also quite effective and included a representation that had never been featured at Innis Orientation in the past. This year was definitely filled with a lot of firsts, but it certainly did not lack in excitement and engagement with the incoming students."

Overall, Innis' first ever virtual orientation went extremely well, thanks to the hard work of the Orientation Coordinators, the Executive Team, the Captains and Leaders, Innis College staff members, and, of course, the first-years who attended and participated. Although orientation was quite different than it was in previous years, it was still an amazing event. ♦

UFable: Uof T's First Student-Created Online Club Hub

Shankhalika Srikanth
NAVIGATING THE ONLINE JUNGLE

Getting involved in extracurriculars at the University of Toronto can often feel intimidating. There are over a hundred different clubs, but it may feel impossible to find the one that exactly suits your interests. The pandemic, which has moved all clubs online, does not make the search any easier. UFable, with its goal of fostering interactions between students, may have the solution.

UFable is a student-created, web-based platform that provides both a centralized hub for all clubs at U of T and space to join and create study groups.

The "club hub" has two features: Club List and Club Feed. Club Feed provides a place for clubs to post events and announcements. Club List is, unsurprisingly, a list of all the clubs currently registered with UFable. So far, 140 clubs have registered; the goal is to have all clubs at the university registered and accessible to students. Any club that is registered has complete control over what they include in their club description. For most clubs, this is a brief overview of the club along with their contact info. Within the Club List, students are able to search for specific clubs or filter by their interest.

UFable also allows you to search for study partners. Every course currently offered at U of T is listed in their dropdown menu. A user simply has to select a course that they are in, and can then either join an existing study group for that course or start a new one. Study groups are limited to 2-4 people. As of now, there is no way to directly communicate with other students through UFable itself. This means it is up to the individual user to include their contact information (e.g. email, Instagram handle) in their profile to be able to then connect with their fellow study group members. Access is limited to U of T students as registration requires a valid utoronto email address.

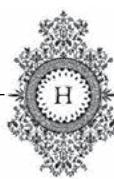
Although UFable is best accessed on a desktop computer, the team is working to make it mobile-responsive as well. Desktop-mode was prioritized since the majority of students likely spend most of their time on their laptops to access online classes through applications like Zoom. As of now, UFable is operable, but is still in a testing phase as it works to expand its reach to more of the student body.

UFable is the brainchild of two U of T students, Daesol Jung and Yesinn Kwak, both studying cognitive science and statistics. After noticing the interaction barrier in classes held in large lecture halls, they were inspired to create something that would be able to connect students and bring together all essential aspects of campus life into one centralized hub. The initial brainstorming took place well before the pandemic hit, and revolved around a matching algorithm. Once holding in-person events became infeasible, the idea evolved into its current form as an exclusively digital platform.

The name UFable can expand to mean "your fable" or "the story of you." The other inspiration behind the name comes from *Aesop's Fables*. It refers to a story called *The Four Oxen and the Lion*, which describes how the lion can easily defeat a single ox on its own, but when allied together, the lion is no match for all four oxen. Daesol and Yesinn see the lion as being U of T in this metaphor, and the students as being the oxen. They hope that students are able to connect with each other using UFable, and together, overcome all the increased challenges of university.

UFable can be accessed online at ufable.co. You can also reach the team online on Instagram at [ufable.co](https://www.instagram.com/ufable.co) or by email at team@ufable.co. ♦

Digital



2020 Holiday Ideas for International Students

Samiha Sanjida
STUDENT LIFE

As 2020 rapidly draws to a close, the holiday break is almost upon us. Whether it be during Reading Week or Winter Break, we all want to get out and have some fun without the ever-present stress of school weighing us down.

Before I jump into my list of places to visit and things to do, I would like to preface this article by reminding everyone to please abide by the proper safety precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19.

For those who are interested in winter activities, although the Santa Claus Parade is cancelled, Nathan Phillips Square is open for skating! Drop in for free skate instructions and DJ Skate night, open in late November from 9 am to 10 pm.

While the Christmas Market is officially cancelled this year, there's still lots of festive spirit to witness in the Distillery District! The Toronto Light Festival flickers on at 7 pm every day from January 17 to March 1! Bundle up, head on out, and

celebrate the season. The festival, now in its fourth year, is once again showcasing local and international light artists. To top it all off, the entire experience, encompassing 13 acres and 45 buildings, is completely free.

Interested in more free activities? The Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) is offering visitors under 25 free, unlimited admission. Just sign up for the Annual AGO Pass, keeping in mind that members must book timed-entry general admission tickets in advance. Exhibitions include *Illusions: The Art of Magic* (closing November 8), *Studio 54: Night Magic* (opening December 26), and more! View Canadian, Indigenous, and multiple other art collections from around the world.

Though not free, the Bata Shoe Museum (BSM) and Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) are also great places to take a look at! The Bata Shoe Museum has been described as unusual, but it's right around the corner of campus, so why not check it out? With a renowned collection of over 14,000 artifacts, the BSM uses footwear to tell the story of social and cultural evolutions throughout history. The ROM, though no less interesting, has more of a classic approach to communicating history.

Ever been in a castle? Casa Loma is a majestic palace dedicated to historic conservation. You can explore at your own pace, so make sure to spend a day searching the secret tunnels, gardens, and towers. Enjoy the dining halls and stop by the gift shop for a memento of your visit!

A personal favourite of mine, Ripley's Aquarium, is open everyday from 10 am to 8 pm. Explore the various galleries and see

all the different parts of the ocean right in front of your eyes! With exhibitions such as *Canadian Waters*, *Planet Jellyfish*, and *Dangerous Lagoon*, you won't even need a scuba suit to take a deep dive.

Interested in sports? While Toronto's Hockey Hall of Fame is not holding games right now, there is still lots to explore. Take a tour of the exhibits, including the Montreal Canadiens Dressing Room and the Stanley Cup Dynasties, or head down to the video game kiosks and Slapshot Trivia.

And, last but not least, I recommend taking a walk around the streets of campus! Toronto is filled with charming little shops and diners, many very close to Innis. No matter what you do, I wish you all a very happy holiday season! ♦



The 6 Zoom Commandments

A How-To Guide to Surviving and Thriving through Midterm Season

Angelina Zahajko

STUDENT LIFE

Well, folks, midterm season is upon us. Whether it is your first time or you're a seasoned pro, testing time is unlike anything many have ever seen before. Here is your ultimate guide to surviving Zoom University.

1. Be like the Boy Scouts: Always be Prepared!

This year's testing period is just like any other... with a couple of caveats. One new obstacle is the sheer amount of software used within one course; for example, this semester, I have six different programs that are used for six different types of assignments that are due each week — trust me, it's exactly as exhausting as you would think. To avoid any fun surprises, ensure that you know the website your test will be taken on, secure your Wi-Fi connection, and know the date and time. More importantly, know the *time difference* if you live outside the Eastern Time Zone to take one stressor out of the testing day.

2. Atmosphere Changes Everything

Odds are you spend 75% of your day at a desk; however, if you're like me, that also means that your brain gets stale sitting in the same place after a while. One of my biggest go-to's for reenergizing my brain is changing up my environment. Whether that means lighting a candle, moving locations, opening a window; you don't have to have a Pinterest study space to create a good studying atmosphere.

3. A Good Grade is a Planned Grade

I have a confession to make: I have a mild obsession with StudyTube. One of my guilty pleasures is watching people plan their productive lives in beautiful bullet journals using pens that are more expensive than my jeans, while I procrastinate my own work. That said, I love planning and I find that it is essential for keeping on track with my studies when I have a million items on my to-do list. Go through the necessary syllabi prior to your midterms, and assign dates to specific subject matter on your calendar up until the midterm date. This applies to essay-style midterms as well: mark out a date for outlining, drafting, revising, etc. and there's no way you won't be prepared for test day.

4. Ask for Help (Seriously, it works)

When all your interactions occur through a screen, it is understandable to feel alone, especially if you are living out-of-province, like myself, or even internationally. However, one of the beautiful things about the internet is that distance is unquantifiable. No matter where you are in the world, the U of T community can follow you virtually.

Everything from office hours to learning resources has been

moved online, so take advantage of the help that is available to you! Office hours with professors can be intimidating, but they are experts in their field who love talking about research, so they're more than willing (most of the time) to help students who are going out of their way to better their understanding. If you are struggling to find your study rhythm, manage your time, or are having trouble adjusting to online school, U of T's learning strategists is a perfect tool to help you find what method of learning makes sense for you.

My personal favourite from Innis College's resources is the Writing Centre. As a social sciences student, my day-to-day consists of moving from one essay to the next, so the Writing Centre has been my saving grace when it comes to harnessing my academic writing skills. A word from the wise: many Innis College resources are working off an appointment basis, so especially during busy test times, make sure to book your appointment far in advance.

5. Sometimes Not Studying is the Best Form of Studying

All right, we must take a brief intermission from our regularly scheduled anecdotes to have a serious discussion about mental health. It is indisputable that university is stressful, but — and I can't stress this enough — no grade is worth compromising your mental health. Ever.

Burn out is the bane of many students' existence and, as a chronic perfectionist in remission, I am embarrassed to say that I have endured my fair share of it. I would spend an egregious amount of time powering through Quizlet flashcards at all hours of the night until I passed out at my desk. An overdue, but essential, realization I had was that sometimes not studying is the best way to study effectively.

Whether that is releasing endorphins by working up a sweat, slowing your heartbeat down with meditation, safely hanging out with your friends, or catching up on your favourite show, taking

“No grade is worth compromising your mental health. Ever.”

a moment to let your brain reset, instead of cramming as much information into it as you can, will allow you to not only better retain information but also sustain a work-life balance that is so crucial during your time at university.

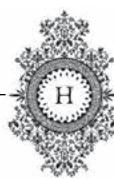
6. Everything is a Learning Opportunity

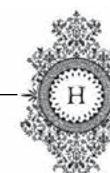
So, you've gone through this list, you have finished your midterms, and you have received your grades on Quercus; there are two ways this could go:

Pathway #1: You ace your midterms! Congratulations! I knew you could do it!

Pathway #2: You open Quercus and your heart falls... you didn't do as well as you thought you did.

It is a situation we have all been in and an unfortunate rite of passage for the majority of university students. At that moment, it can feel like the end of the world, but I am here to tell you that it is going to be okay. Even if you feel that you studied your hardest and you felt confident in your performance, sometimes the world knocks you flat on your back in unexpected ways. However, for your own mental well-being, you can't agonize over things that you can't change. Dwelling on fixed aspects of life will do nothing for you in the long run, so it is best to take the loss and use the criticism you received to come back stronger during the next testing period. ♦





How Innis College Choir Powered Through COVID-19

Tony Niu
INNIS LIFE

VProvost Students, Thursday, March 12, 2020, 4:38 PM:

"The University has recommended that all discretionary events, not required as part of courses and academic requirements, should be cancelled or postponed. The safety of the University community is our priority."

As soon as I received this email in my inbox, my mind went straight to the two clubs I co-managed last semester, one of them being the Innis College Choir. I was worried. I was worried that we would not be able to showcase our collective talent and effort that we put in since the beginning of winter semester. However, I was still hoping. Hoping that the situation would get better.

University of Toronto President, Friday, March 13, 2020, 11:13 AM:

"We have decided to cancel all in-person undergraduate and research-stream Masters and Doctoral courses across U of T's three campuses, and we will provide that teaching by other means (which may include existing online platforms)."

Then, I remember vividly, the next morning while I was manning my desk at the Innis College IT Support, I got this email from the U of T President. It stated that all in-person classes would be cancelled and that the campus would be pretty much shut down beginning March 16, the following Monday.

For any other club, the news of a campus-wide shutdown might not be as huge of a deal as it is to a choir—we only did things in-person. For those who don't know, we usually hold in-person rehearsals once a week. We also have one grand concert at the end of each semester to showcase what we have learned, with many members performing their own solo/duet pieces. So, the April concert that we had originally planned was pretty much cancelled from the looks of this email.

As the Co-Directors of Innis Choir, Effie Liang and I immediately went into panic mode over Facebook messenger both that Thursday and Friday. We both knew that we had limited time to make a decision since our weekly choir rehearsals fell on Fridays. We didn't want to force our commuter members to risk their health to come all the way to campus, but we also didn't want to suddenly end our rehearsals completely. We were at a crossroads seven hours before our rehearsal.

In the span of about ten minutes from when we received President Gertler's email, we made a decision to make this last rehearsal of the semester optional, so that those who didn't want to travel to campus could stay at home. Additionally, we decided to record whatever we learned during that rehearsal. We were grateful that our members all came so prepared in their all-black attire with water bottles, understanding, and positivity. We were able to record three songs we had learned by that time using my poorly-set-up studio microphone and my cell phone camera.

When I asked Effie to reflect on this day, she said, "In March, my initial thoughts were that COVID-19 was an issue to be taken seriously but also that it meant our plans for the concert were halted.

As much as I wished I could co-direct our second concert with Tony, we needed to come up with an alternative that satisfied all our members. We spent the winter semester preparing choral songs and other pieces, and we wanted to showcase everyone's hard work. The virtual 'concert' was pre-recorded on limited resources with Tony's microphone and phone. It was the best we could do in that short amount of time, and I feel like everyone was glad to have a chance to sing together one last time before the university closed."

Fast forward to the summer, both Effie and I had agreed to discuss alternative virtual rehearsal plans in case we can't host any in-person rehearsals. When faced with something so unprecedented and so new, we felt challenged but also inspired. As one could imagine, coordinating online rehearsals for any choir would be extremely difficult. In fact, some of the other musical groups on campus had decided to cancel their entire year due to the technical difficulties caused by COVID-19. But for us, we were ready to make a virtual choir happen.

In the span of four months, we scheduled countless meetings—most of them up to three or four hours—where we were just brainstorming new and possible ideas to implement in this virtual environment. We reached out to the Orientation Coordinators to see if they could help us promote Innis Choir. They did an impeccable job advertising all the ICSS clubs, which we really appreciated. We scheduled meetings with our returning members to ask for their inputs on a virtual choir, and again, we were glad almost all returning members were still interested even if we hosted rehearsals completely online.

Then, we realized we had to address the problem of technology. Connection issues



We were ready to make a virtual choir happen — Tony Niu



can interfere with beats and rhythms, which meant having a live pianist for online rehearsals would be impractical. Given me and my Co-Director's background in acapella, we decided to start learning acapella songs to test the waters.

When I asked Effie to reflect on this journey, she said, "When I heard about the fall semester closures, rather than feeling discouraged, I actually felt excited to plan something that hadn't been done before. Virtual choir practice is certainly different than an in-person rehearsal due to the technological restraints and time availability for members, especially those who live in different time zones. The summer planning process was definitely challenging, but right now, it feels gratifying to have community feedback towards how we can run more efficient and fun rehearsals."

Completely beyond of my expectations, a lot of people showed up to our first rehearsal of the 2020 fall semester, where we went over what our club is about. The following week, we started learning actual music and singing, which was much more difficult. The lagging Internet made it troublesome to play my MIDI keyboard and nearly impossible to sing as a group. However, what surprised me the most was the commitment and talent of our members. Not only were they able to learn the music on their own, but they also supported each other with such welcoming and positive attitudes.

Our initial goal for virtual choir was never to ask members to master singing or memorize songs. Instead, we really wanted to foster an inclusive and relaxing environment for people to socialize,

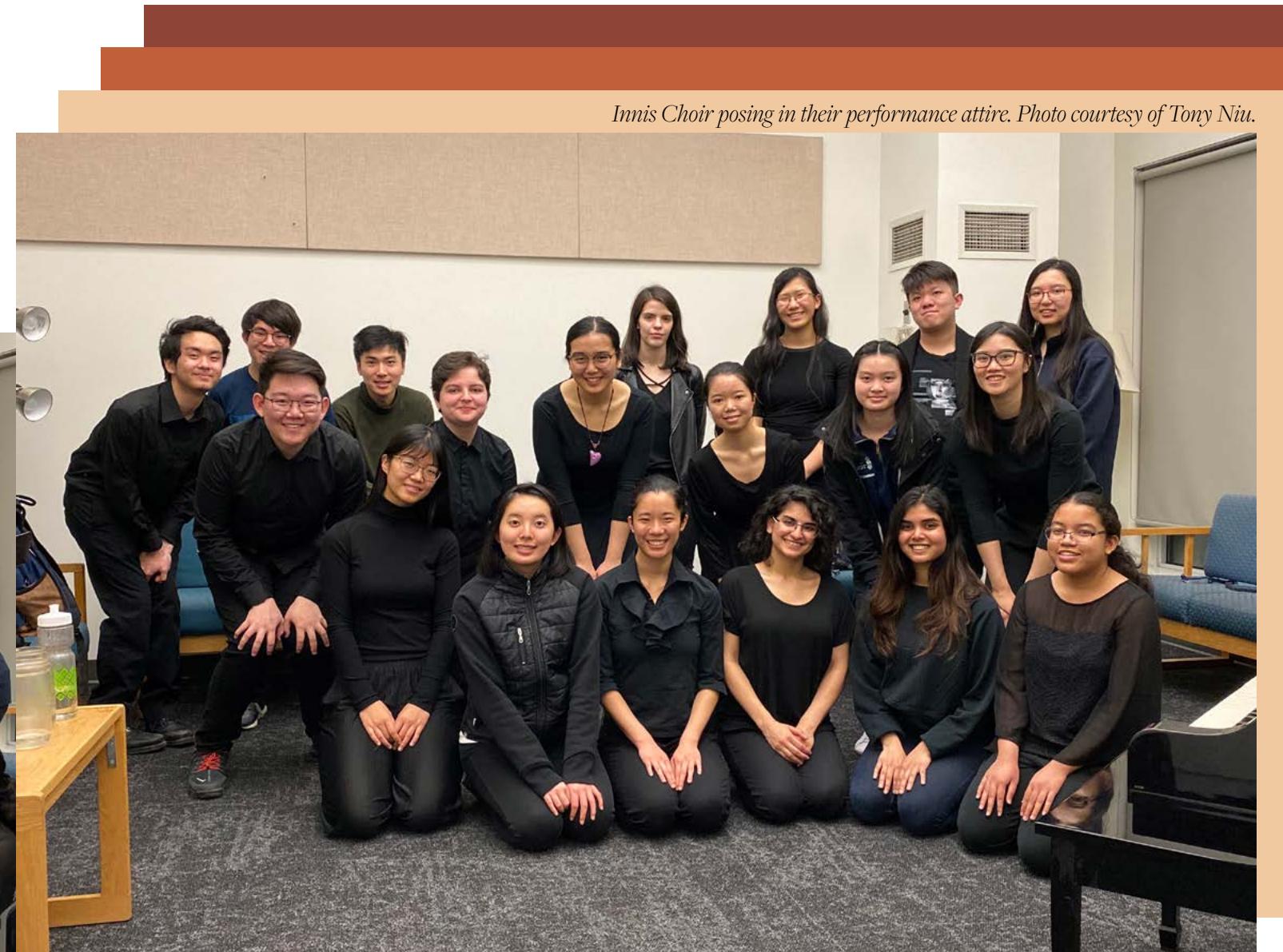


de-stress, and have fun through music. We're so glad our members are enjoying themselves. "I really enjoy the collaborative process between students online, and it was one of the things I was looking forward to", says Effie. "Learning music and singing in choirs has been a stress reliever of mine, and being a first-year student having online university classes is also a new experience that brings on a lot of stressors. Our goal is to provide a safe, inclusive space where folks can learn about music and more techniques on how to sing better. As Co-Directors, Tony and I wanted to focus on community outreach and providing a non-academic activity that first years and upper years alike could participate in. Building relationships between our members and fostering a small yet close community of music lovers is how Innis Choir functions as a club at Innis College."

To echo what Effie had said, we are a non-auditioned choir, so even if you just want to pop in and sing something or simply learn about singing and music, you are more than welcome to join us! This semester, our rehearsals are completely online on Zoom on Fridays from 6 PM to 8 PM. For anyone interested in joining, feel free to email us at inniscollegechoir@gmail.com

Lastly, I want to personally thank everyone who helped us make virtual choir a reality. This includes the ICSS for providing us funds, the Orientation Coordinators for promoting us during Orientation Week, my Co-Director Effie for making everything so easy for me, and our lovely members! ♦

Innis Choir posing in their performance attire. Photo courtesy of Tony Niu.



De-stress

Life After Undergrad

Fiona Hoang
STUDENT LIFE

"When we view the past through the lens of hindsight, the journey undertaken and challenges overcome will often seem less monumental than they were at the moment of experience."

Though profound and thought-provoking, this astute counsel from my high school principal hardly helps ease the worry of failure. As an undergraduate, obtaining a bachelor's degree certainly feels like a Gatsbyan green light right now. In a competitive environment such as the University of Toronto, these first four years at university are never an easy feat — with or without COVID-19. But what do our predecessors say, those who have unlocked this achievement?

We firstly interview Ibraheem Aziz, who graduated from U of T in 2019 with a Bachelor of Commerce. He is an Innis College alumnus, currently working in payments strategy at the Bank of Montreal. During his time at Innis, he volunteered with the InSIGHT mentorship program, working with first-year students to help them navigate the university environment. He also served on the Innis College Council as a student representative, and he continues to remain involved as an alumni mentor with the college.

As an undergraduate student, Ibraheem's plans after graduation were to travel and begin working full-time in his field. Throughout his third and fourth years, he applied to various roles, ultimately landing an internship and subsequent full-time role in strategy and financial services. Coming from a commerce background, Ibraheem knew that it was important to enter the workforce shortly after school — a goal which he successfully achieved through networking and leveraging both his classroom and extracurricular experiences. And we are glad to hear that he did end up having the opportunity to travel as well!

Fortunately, the onset of COVID-19 occurred about nine months after his graduation, at which point Ibraheem was already settled into his job and shifting to working remotely. While he was not able to travel or have face-to-face interactions as much during the summer, our interviewee has found that his career progress was

interrupted and that there was still plenty of time to relax with family and friends.

What about his advice to current undergrads? "I wish I knew that it's ok to not have a defined, linear path to what you want to do after school," replied Ibraheem. "During undergrad, I often felt pressure to 'figure everything out,' and while it's important to have an idea of what you want to do after school, the reality is that your plans will never occur exactly as you might envision. Trust the process and be comfortable with ambiguity; it opens you to a broader set of opportunities."

Ibraheem also gives a lot of credit to the InSIGHT mentorship program

By the end of his third year of undergraduate studies, Hector already had plans to pursue a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences, and he is currently on track with this in the U.S. Luckily, as he was on 2018 admission for graduate school; the impact of COVID-19 had just missed him, but it seems that even for the 2019 admission for his current program, there was a large number of students from all around the world.

When asked about advice for current undergraduates at U of T, Hector emphasized the importance of connecting with others ahead of one's desired career path and listening to their stories and advice. "I started my research at the end of my

Photo courtesy of Hayley Vlcek



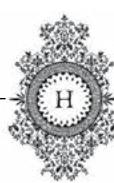
for helping him articulate an empathic leadership skill set. Throughout his upper years, he had the opportunity to mentor students from across various fields of study, which helped him develop his own communicative abilities in learning from their experiences. As a member of the Rotman Commerce Competition Team, Ibraheem was also competing in various global competitions and conferences, which helped him understand the value of bringing a team mindset to address real-time challenges, all while working towards a common goal.

Our other interviewee is an alumnus from the class of 2018: Chenghao (Hector) He. Hector graduated from U of T with a bachelor's degree in biological physics. During his undergrad years, he also volunteered as a mathematics science tutor at The Saturday Program, organized by the University of Toronto Medical Society. Hector currently resides in the New York City Metropolitan Area, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. at Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

second-year undergraduate, so I was lucky to stay in a very academic environment for my final two years," he wrote in our correspondence. "I learned how to face graduate school by chatting with colleagues there, in a very casual way."

I often envision myself and my fellow students after graduation. Some of us will be able to enjoy each stage of our life as it comes. For some, the responsibilities of supporting themselves will prove a great challenge. Some of us will use the opportunity shortly after college to travel with freedom seldom experienced ever again. Some may struggle with loneliness and making new friends in a foreign place, while others relish in the opportunity to learn more from a wider array of life experiences.

There is no definite answer to the question, "What is life like after graduation?" because each response is unique to the responder. And because as much as freedom and possibilities have opened up for students when attending university, more opportunities and challenges will find us afterwards. ♦



Grad

Yazmeen Kanji

Dean's Scholar Graduate in Peace, Conflict and Justice Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, Equity Studies and Cinema Studies



Working as a Recent Graduate in a Pandemic

Yazmeen Kanji
STUDENT LIFE

The thought of graduating likely feels bittersweet to any undergraduate student coming to the end of their degree. I can probably speak on behalf of the graduating class of 2020 when I say that it was especially bitter because we may not have known that our last in-person class would be our last as an undergraduate student. Personally, I had always been eager to graduate and work full-time towards a career in media and social purpose work. By the beginning of March 2020, I felt I had fulfilled most of my expectations for what I had hoped my undergraduate life would have to offer. I was, of course, looking forward to the end of term celebrations and a chance to appreciate my final days as a student on campus. The abrupt end to my undergraduate life without an in-person ceremony left me with a feeling of incompleteness. Nevertheless, I jumped right into the work I hoped to take on by virtue of being well-connected after taking advantage of networking opportunities throughout the past four years.

In my second year as an Innis College student, I founded Films With A Cause, a filmmaking organization that produces and promotes socially conscious content. I had the help of friends, many of whom also happened to be Innis students. They

encouraged my efforts and volunteered their time to support my vision. Through the organization, we put on successful events, including the premiere of my first film, *From Syria To Hope*, at Innis Town Hall. I continue to work with my team at Films With A Cause, as our operations have grown quite a bit within the past year. I had the opportunity to direct a docu-series called *World Table* for Matthew House, an organization that supports the needs of refugee claimants. After working with Matthew House in my service-learning class as a Peace, Conflict and Justice student, I was able to take part in this eye-opening experience. Each episode highlights a previous refugee claimant who benefited from their services and shares their stories as they cook a dish from their home country. Furthermore, I was hired by a previous professor to direct her podcast, the *Liberation Pedagogy Project*, through New College. This summer, I was also occupied with completing my second film, *With Love From Munera*, which premiered at this year's Inside Out Film Festival. Additionally, I am the Administrative Assistant for a Toronto-based production company, Canesugar Filmworks, and found myself learning about the film industry in new ways despite not being able to work in-person. Without intending to, I became a digital media freelancer right out of undergrad.

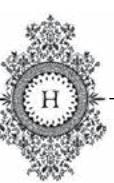
It may seem daunting to graduate without a specific job in mind. However, I learned early on that if you find mentors in your general fields of interest, you will discover what path makes the most sense for you. Once I decided in my third year that I truly wanted to commit to a career in filmmaking and film directing, I set up coffee meetings with folks I had met at events in the city to understand what options may be available for emerging people of colour filmmakers. I am currently developing a narrative short film about a proud Muslim teenager who daydreams to escape her

realities, and I am using the networks I've acquired to bring my script to life.

I am extremely grateful to have the privilege to work towards a dream that I've had from a very young age. I want to encourage current students and recent graduates to entertain the idea of pursuing the intimidating goals you have for yourself because now is the time to consider that they could become your reality. I'd say it is crucial to follow your gut instincts while also being strategic about maintaining financial responsibility.

I have met many established creatives in the film industry who did not begin their careers in the field until after working in other fields and discovering that their passions lie elsewhere. Personal development work is also crucial to realize that you are entitled to reach your dreams. After graduating, I finally bought my own books and read for my own learning, rather than reading to perform in an examination. Developing a sense of identity away from being a student, when that is the only life many of us have known and been committed to, is something we may not consider until we come to the end of our schooling.

Of course, a barrier to personal development work can be mental health difficulties, which is especially challenging for students who must manage their relationship with themselves while staying on top of school work and attempting to maintain a healthy lifestyle. It goes without saying that the life of an undergraduate student is a constant struggle to find a balance when that balance may not even exist. In my opinion, it is more about constantly shifting where your priorities lie, rather than offering your time equally to all parts of your life. I will always fondly cherish the memories I made as an Innis College student and appreciate the benefits of academic learning. That being said, I can say I am now ready to begin the next chapter. And you will be too. ♦



Negative effects of COVID-19 and Online Learning on Students with Disabilities

Catherine Dumé

PRE-EXISTING SOCIAL CONDITIONS



Photo courtesy of Josh Appel, Unsplash.

“Normality”

Everyone wants the world to return to normal. Back to the good old days when masks were not needed and everyone could leave their homes with little fear. However, in communities with disabilities, normality does not exist. It never has and it never will because people with disabilities experience life differently.

In a pre-pandemic world, people with disabilities experience challenges every day to do the same things that a non-disabled person would find easy. For example, people who are deaf or who have a hearing impairment rely on visual aids such as sign language and/or lipreading to understand what is being said. People who can walk are free to go anywhere they please, while people who use a wheelchair will find it difficult to enter certain buildings if there is no ramp available. Even those who have invisible disabilities/illnesses can struggle in ways most people are unaware of. Those who are epileptic must work harder in school, as they experience periods of “fog” after every seizure. These foggy periods are when their brain works slower in understanding and

communicating things.

Since coronavirus took over, the disabled community has been especially impacted. In addition to aforementioned barriers for people with disabilities, new hurdles are emerging. For example, people with underlying medical conditions are now highly restricted because of their increased risk of contracting the virus. While all of our lives have been altered, people who have disabilities may be experiencing this pandemic with greater hardships.

Online School

It has been seven months since the lockdown, and school has started once again. But life at university has now changed due to the pandemic. Campus life is nearly non-existent as most students are now attending classes online for health and safety reasons. Yet, this new online world is just as problematic as the former. Students with disabilities may be safe at home, but certain features of online studying interfere heavily with the students’ education.

A visually impaired Innis student whom I interviewed experiences eye strain

when she must focus on a screen for a long time. Now, with everything being accessed through screens, eyestrain and headaches only become more frequent as the term goes on. Now she must find a new routine that allows her to complete work without discomfort.

Another interviewed Innis student who is hearing impaired stated that one of the hardest parts of attending lectures online is bad internet connection. Now that everything is online, students rely on a good connection to hear their professors and fellow students. As for this hearing impaired student who already struggles to hear people, the bad connection only makes it worse, gurgling people’s voices and making what they say difficult to understand.

I also interviewed a New College student who has ocular albinism (a type of visual impairment), and they said that one important accommodation she needs is the ability to enlarge fonts. With a bigger font, she is able to read without eye strain. However, not all websites are able to do this. Last year, this would not be much of an issue as there are many ways to acquire

information, like going to the library. But since school has been online, she must rely solely on getting information through websites that may or may not have that specific feature.

Now, online school is not entirely horrible: commuters and people with physical disabilities are grateful for the option to stay home. However, being home leads to the problem of distraction. This problem is well known to students who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In Erin Peter’s Fulcrum article, “How online courses are affecting students with disabilities,” she explains how students with this disorder may be impacted by the change of scenery: “Without the need to wake up, arrive at a physical classroom, and leave at specific times, it can be difficult for students with learning disabilities to strike a balance between being at home and completing schoolwork.”

Online schooling requires students to teach themselves to some degree. They are the ones in charge of when they wake up, attend classes, and complete their assignments. While it does not deviate too much from what a university student should be doing already, there is more responsibility being put on their shoulders. Before the pandemic, students were told when and where their classes were. This year, however, some courses have turned asynchronous, which requires students to pick a day and time to watch the lecture. With this added obligation, along with keeping up with their courses, students with learning disabilities can find themselves overwhelmed.

It is this overwhelming feeling that impacts students with learning disabilities the most. Fear and anxiety can stress students who are already registered with Accessibility Services and have wrestled with mental illness pre-pandemic. Now with the pandemic uprooting any sense of confidence in the future, students who suffer from anxiety and other illnesses may find it harder to cope at this time.

For a few, online school has been a blessing in disguise. But for many students, attending school online has become more of a curse and a disadvantage than a blessing.

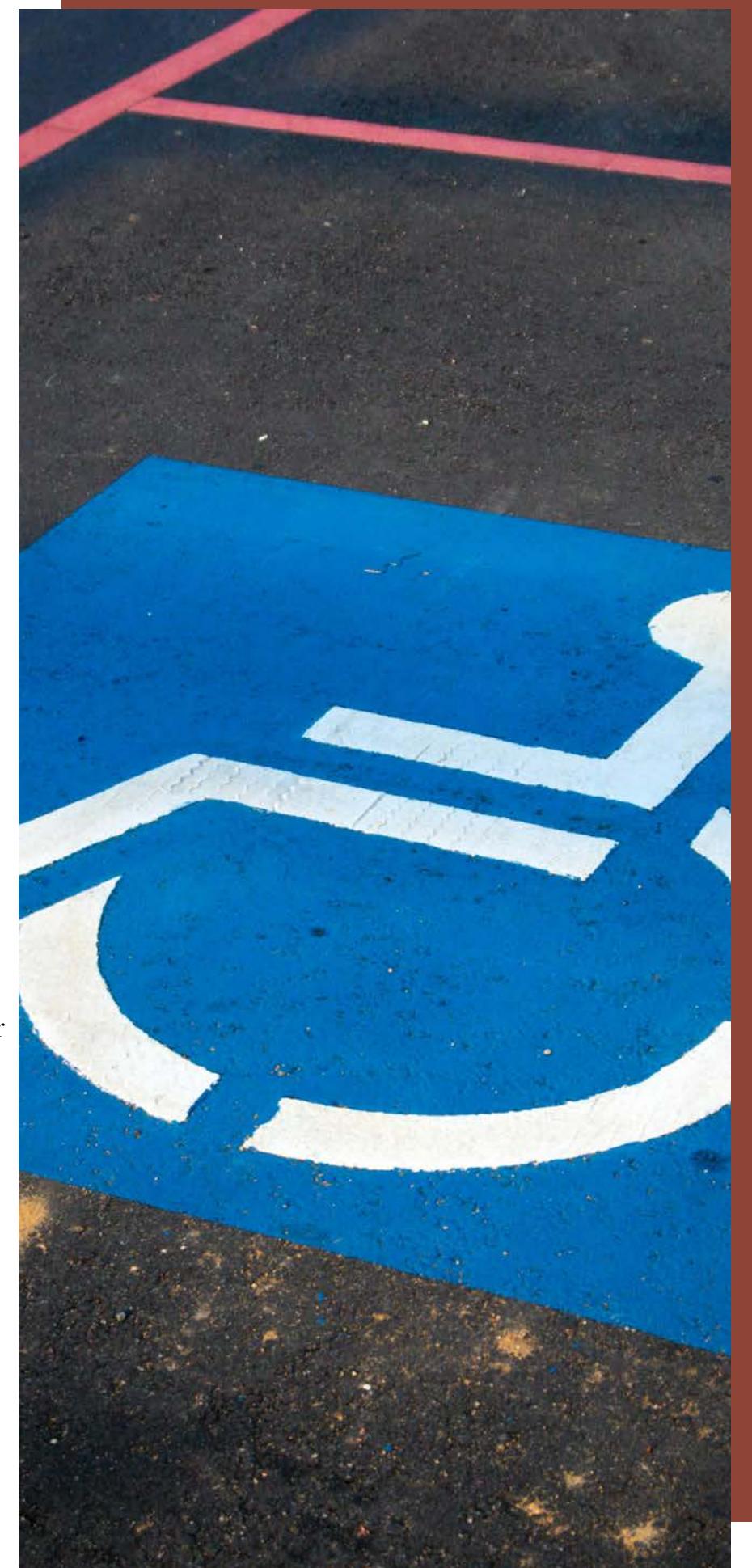
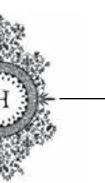
Moving Forward

So, what can the University of Toronto do to address this issue? How might they better serve their students with disabilities? So far, Accessibility Services has been working hard with their registered students by finding proper accommodation for their needs. But more work needs to be done if we are to fix the problem of insufficient aids. After all, it seems like the virus is going to stay a while longer. In the meantime, the university continues to encourage students to stay home and attend classes online.

There are two ways the university could approach this issue:

1. Come up with new creative ways to accommodate students within the existing system. For example, in addition to note-takers, allowing students who have hearing impairments to gain access to transcripts or captioning of online synchronous lectures.
2. Invent new forms of accommodations that are designed for an online environment. For instance, coming up with strategies for those who have ADHD and may struggle to focus at home.

Online learning is not easy and coming up with solutions is even harder, but it is not impossible. Hopefully, students at the university will be able to succeed despite the circumstances and achieve a sense of normalcy. However, not a normal that discriminates against those who are different. Rather, a new normal, where innovative solutions allow the disabled community of the University of Toronto and beyond to thrive. ♦



Rather, a new normal, where innovative solutions allow the disabled community of the University of Toronto and beyond to thrive — Catherine Dumé





What the COVID-19 era has meant for refugees around the globe

Celine Hajj Sleiman
PRE-EXISTING SOCIAL CONDITIONS

To say that this year has not been easy would be an understatement. The spread of COVID-19 has hung a shadow of uncertainty over the future, forcing us to acclimatize to a lonelier standard of living. Being isolated from friends and family is certainly a challenge, but at least in the face of this illness, Canadians who develop symptoms can rely on the country's healthcare procedures for their diagnoses and treatment. Globally, however, not everyone has been so fortunate.

Refugees and asylum seekers across the world are facing an even greater challenge than the rest of us. In many cases, their living conditions have prevented them from abiding by the necessary social distancing restrictions or from being tested for COVID-19 after exhibiting symptoms. The Syrian and Palestinian refugee populations in Lebanon are a prime example of this.

Most of these refugees live in camps, with families crammed into temporary structures such as tents. With Lebanon's ongoing economic crisis, they have limited access to basic necessities, including water and sanitation. The Lebanese government has failed to supply camps with connections

to municipal water, forcing them to rely on water trucks. They receive up to nine gallons of water per day, which is dangerously short of the standard 26 gallons per day that is suggested by the World Health Organization. There is simply not enough water to spare for regular cleaning and hygiene maintenance. Water scarcity and overpopulation make Lebanon's refugee camps particularly susceptible to infection.

Despite the estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 88% of them are undocumented. Lebanon's residency laws are strict, forcing most of these refugees to lead a life of secrecy and evasion from local authorities. In 2019, the Higher Defence Council of Lebanon introduced several new policies in an attempt to reduce the population of undocumented persons. They approved the demolition of unofficial camps and a more rigorous deportation procedure for refugees without the proper paperwork. This made it especially difficult for refugees to find work and move freely through the country, as there is an extensive network of checkpoints in place. The pandemic has only heightened their fear of discovery. Dr. Feras Alghadban, a local medical professional with the Endless Medical Advantage initiative, expressed extreme concern for his Syrian patients in the Bekaa Valley. Many who develop symptoms of COVID-19 are too scared to officially report it or to seek health care from hospitals that will require paperwork. Additionally, hospitals are now charging extra for COVID-19 testing. The fee

varies between medical institutions, but the cost generally makes the test inaccessible to refugees who are already struggling through Lebanon's economic collapse.

The spread of the virus was contained during Lebanon's lockdown in the spring, however, after the catastrophic explosion that wracked Beirut in August, people have resumed protesting the government in the streets, causing a second wave of the virus to spread. The Lebanese government tried and failed to implement another lockdown with businesses refusing to close. Since then, the number of cases of COVID-19 has escalated drastically. Today, there are over 50,000 detected cases in total, and the government seems incapable of taking action. Although several outbreaks of COVID-19 have been reported in different refugee camps, we may never know the true extent of the pandemic's spread amongst the Syrian refugees, as they continue to live in fear of losing their freedom.

Mental health is another concern for displaced populations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) National Call Centre has received many calls from refugees in Lebanon and Africa experiencing depression and suicidal thoughts because of their living conditions. Filippo Grandi, head of UNHCR, has highlighted how important it is to offer refugees hope in the face of such uncertainty. They cannot see a bright future or a way to shield themselves against the virus while still providing for their families.



Food shortages are a major factor as well. The outbreak of COVID-19 has thrown many countries into an economic recession, which has had a significant effect on food supplies and prices. For refugees who are already struggling to make ends meet, the pandemic is leading them to starvation. All across East Africa, the spread of COVID-19 has blocked trade routes and created congestion between borders. The average price of a food basket in the Republic of Congo has gone up by 15%. In Rwandan refugee camps, the situation is even worse, as food prices have increased by an alarming 40%. The World Food Programme recently cut half its aid services in Cameroon because of a lack of funding. This also applies to the Nigerian refugees in the area. To support their families, refugees are forced to cut their meal portions or skip meals entirely, which is causing a multitude of health problems.

In Ethiopia, over 50% of refugee children have been diagnosed with severe anemia and other illnesses caused by nutrient deficiency such as kwashiorkor: a lack of the nutrients required for maximum growth and development. This state of malnourishment weakens their immunities, which increases the risk of them catching the virus. Like the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, their overcrowded living conditions and lack of sanitation services also increase their susceptibility to COVID-19.

However, their fear of catching the virus is overshadowed by a more immediate issue: hunger. In Sudan, an estimated 80% of refugees have resorted to either arranged marriages, begging, or prostitution to afford the price of food. Social distancing protocols are being ignored, furthering the spread of the virus. It is a vicious cycle and one that will not be easily broken. The World Food Programme is attempting to raise donations for East Africa, but over three million dollars will be required to provide for everyone in need.

Another refugee population in crisis is in Lesbos, Greece. In July, the medical non-governmental organization Médecins San Frontières was forced by local authorities to shut down its COVID-19 isolation and care centre on the island. Refugees being treated for infectious diseases have had their recovery disrupted by this shutdown, which led to many unnecessary deaths. The organization had set up the care centre in case the pandemic reached the refugee camps, believing that local hospitals would not be able to handle such an outbreak.

When a migrant in Moria — the largest refugee camp in Greece — tested positive for COVID-19, the camp was placed under lockdown. Over thirty others were infected, with relatively no access to

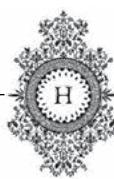
healthcare services beyond testing for the virus. Then disaster truly struck. Moria was reduced to ash and rubble overnight as a fire ravaged the camp, leaving its 12,500 inhabitants homeless. Those infected with the virus were forced out of their shelters and onto the streets. The Greek government is currently attempting to move the refugees to closed centres, an initiative that has been criticized by legal workers as an act of immigration detention.

The political turmoil in Greece grows tenser as authorities pressure those displaced by the fire into another refugee camp, despite their collective desire to leave the island. Since the 35 individuals who tested positive

are still missing and threaten to expose Greece to another wave of COVID-19, the government is insisting that the refugees from Moria be isolated.

Organizations like the UNHCR have tried to offer refugees emotional and medical support over the past few months, but given the slow recovery of the world's economy and the indifference of certain governments to the health of their refugee populations, it is unlikely that their hardships are over. Perhaps the worst has passed, or perhaps it is yet to come. In either case, people must remain hopeful for the future. Today's world may not be ideal, but it is the hope for a better tomorrow that pushes us to carry on. ♦





What the U.S. Election Holds for the Future of Abortion Rights

Jaclyn Pahl
POLITICS

In the midst of the U.S. election, fresh anxiety looms over what the future of abortion rights will look like in the country. President Donald Trump's nomination of conservative judge, Amy Coney Barrett, for the Supreme Court has sparked questions of whether a more conservative court could dismantle reproductive rights. The nomination comes in the wake of the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who famously worked to uphold gender equality and ardently defended abortion rights. If the president succeeds in appointing Barrett, the Supreme Court will have a six-to-three person conservative majority. Republicans are rushing to get Barrett confirmed before the presidential election on November 3rd, 2020. Democratic Americans fear that a conservative majority court could overturn its own past jurisprudence holding that regulations cannot place an undue burden on those seeking abortions.

Amy Coney Barrett currently serves as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. She has made at least two judicial rulings in the past restricting abortion access. She has also stated that abortion is "always immoral" and that she does not believe the court will altogether strike down *Roe v. Wade* — the 1973 landmark decision that ensured abortion as a constitutional right — but rather that the court might change how much power individual states have in restricting abortion access.

President Trump himself has spoken with confidence of Barrett's right-leaning views.

"She is certainly conservative in her views," President Trump told Fox & Friends Weekend. He also mirrored Barrett's statements, saying that the power to restrict abortion access might be given "back to the states."

President Trump has also expressed a desire to deconstruct the country's current abortion rights. During his 2016 campaign, the president promised outright to appoint a Supreme Court justice who would "automatically overturn *Roe v. Wade*."

The president has not always been so staunch in his pro-life beliefs. In a 1999 interview with NBC News' Meet the Press, Trump describes himself as "very pro-choice" and went so far as to term himself "pro-choice in every respect." When asked if he would ban third trimester abortions, Trump replied "no." It is this lack of fidelity to one strain of logic that has come to define Trump's presidency. Moreover, this ideological flip-flopping highlights how the president is using pro-life rhetoric as a tool for his own self-preservation. He understands the zealousness of the religious right, hoping that he can ensure their vote if he pantomimes their dogma.

Republicans have been criticized for moving forward with Barrett's nomination so close to the election. There is apparent hypocrisy in allowing President Trump to move forward with the nomination with the presidential election less than one month away with some states already in the process of casting their votes. In 2016, Barack Obama attempted to appoint Merrick Garland to

replace the late justice Antonin Scalia and was prevented by a Senate Republican majority. The Republican majority refused to consider the nomination on the basis that, because it was Obama's last year as president, the next elected president should be the one making the nomination. The refusal to hold a hearing or vote on Obama's nomination was unprecedented. Garland's nomination lasted from March 2016 to January 2017, when Obama's presidency ended. The seat was eventually filled by Neil Gorsuch, appointed by President Trump.

If the president is successful in getting Barrett appointed, he will have appointed a third of the justices on the Supreme Court.

What seems like a struggle between sects of the American population — those who are pro-life and those who are pro-choice — is actually a struggle between the American people and their representation. According to an NBC poll, the majority of Americans do not want to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned. The Wall Street Journal reported on a qualitative study that surveyed 217 Americans and found that most do not fall under either pro-choice or pro-life categories. The researchers engaged the subjects in conversation, and most Americans consider the question of abortion with a variety of factors in mind, such as the health of the mother and child, the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy, and the financial and emotional readiness of the parents. The researchers noted that these are the same factors considered by people getting abortions themselves. The views of Americans are far more complex than the pro-life/pro-choice categories. There is a clear dissonance between the political rhetoric that dominates the issue of reproductive rights and the lived reality of the populace. Even among Barrett's fellow Christians, 59% do not want the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, according to Pew Research Center. *continue on next page...*

A six-three conservative majority is rightly frightening for the menstruating population. However, there is no way to foretell how the justices will rule on individual cases. Including Barrett, the only Supreme Court justice to have openly denounced *Roe v. Wade* is Clarence Thomas. The concern more so lies in that the court has the power to rule in favour of restricting abortion access should they choose. A conservative majority court could

re-assess multiple past liberal rulings, such as the legalization of gay marriage. Over the course of the last century, minority and marginalized populations have invested decades of energy into fighting for the rights currently insured under the constitution, and for them, it is a frightening future to look toward.

The first abortion case to come before the new court concerns the prescription pill, mifepristone, which is used in conjunction

with another drug to induce abortions during early pregnancy. The case could result in further restriction being placed around access to the drug. This could be the first domino in a long line of further laws and regulations restricting abortion access in the United States. While this case likely won't result in a drastic reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, it will indicate the temperament of the post-Ginsburg court toward abortion cases. ♦

Pot, Meet Kettle: Comparing Systemic Racism in Canada and the USA

Drew Glennie
POLITICS

In light of the recent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, Ontario Premier Doug Ford made headlines when — regarding racism — he claimed, "We don't have the systemic deep-roots they have had for years." Premier Ford is not the only one on either side of the border to try to make these types of comparisons. However, while competition between the United States and Canada is nothing new, it is as wrong as it is inaccurate for either country to feel superior to the other when debating issues as serious as systemic racism.

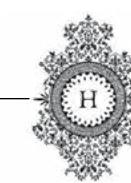
The first thing to acknowledge, as Premier Ford later did, is that it is patently false to say that Canada does not have racist roots. From 1831 until 1996, the Canadian government funded residential schools. Moreover, as reported by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), at the turn of the twentieth century until 1947,

the government put policies into place to specifically hinder and eventually ban Chinese immigration; Japanese-Canadians were banished from their coastal homes during the Second World War, with many being sent to internment camps. The CMHR also states that there are records of both Indigenous and African people being enslaved in Canada, which was only banned twenty-seven years before the American Civil War. While Canada did not have codified segregation laws, according to the CMHR, there were unwritten rules in public areas. Like the United States, Canada enacted racism as a matter of policy from before the federation well into living memory.

Statistically speaking, Canada and the United States are marked by much more similarity than difference in most, if not all, facets of systemic racism. In the United States, *The Washington Post* reported that Black Americans make up over 26% of the victims of police shootings, despite being only 13% of the population; Hispanic Americans make up 18% of victims when

they are only 12% of the population. While police shootings in Canada are a lot less frequent, with a historic high of 40 in one year, CBC's database shows similar trends; from 2018 to mid-2020, in cases where the race was identified, over 35% of the victims were Indigenous and around 7% were Black, despite making up 4.9% and 3.5% of the population respectively. According to the Sentencing Project, disparities in the American criminal justice system extend even further. In 2016, Black men composed 27% of American arrestees and were 1/4 of all people arrested for drug crimes despite the lack of variance of drug use across race. American prosecutors are also more likely to charge people of colour with more serious crimes than their white counterparts. A 2017 Department of Justice study found that Indigenous and Black Canadians make up 23% and 9% of those admitted to federal prisons respectively; Black and visible minority offenders are also more likely to be incarcerated for crimes with a mandatory minimum sentence. *continue on next page...*





Moreover, Canada's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls found that Indigenous women are twelve times more likely to go missing or to be murdered than any other demographic group; similarly, the US Department of Justice found that Indigenous women face murder rates that are ten times the national average.

Parallel trends of systemic racism also emerge regarding access to opportunities. The Center for American Progress (CAP) found that the Black unemployment rate has been consistently two times higher than the white unemployment rate since the 1970s. In 2016, CTV cites the unemployment rate for Black Canadians as almost 2.2 times higher than that of Canadians who are not visible minorities. A Harvard study also found that resumes with "white names" are significantly more likely to get corporate interviews; a University of Toronto study in Canada found similar results. In 2018, while the CAP found that the average American white woman made 79% of the income of the average white man, Black women made only 62%, Indigenous Women 57%, and Hispanic women 54% of the white man's income. The Canadian Women's Foundation found that the average Canadian female earned 75% of the white man's income in 2016, but racialized and Indigenous women earned only 67% and 65% respectively. According to Business Insider in 2018, the real median American household income was about 40% less in Black households than in white households, and the Black poverty rate was 20.7% versus 8.1% for white people. In 2015, Statistics Canada cited the average income of Black Canadians as about 30% less than those who are not visible minorities, while 23.9% of the Black population was considered low income, alongside 20% of other visible minorities and 12.2% of those who are not visible minorities. Meanwhile, according to Robyn Maynard, Black Canadian youth



It is as wrong as it is inaccurate for either country to feel superior to the other when debating issues as serious as systemic racism.

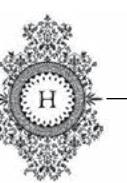
are disproportionately streamed into lower education tracks. In Toronto, where Black students make up 13% of the population, they are only 3% of those labelled as gifted, versus white students who take up over 50% of those spots while accounting for a third of the population. In the United States, a 2019 Cambridge study found that teachers rate their Black students' academic abilities

this knowledge achieve? Are missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls on either side of the border being protected and found? Is the incidence of anti-Black police brutality in Toronto or Atlanta going down? Are women of colour everywhere now being paid at an equal wage to white men or even white women? Unequivocally, the answer is no; these comparisons do

nothing to solve either country's problems. Regarding Canadian's fascination with American racism, McGill history professor Wendell Nii Laryea Adjete stated, in an interview with CBC: "By pointing to the plank in your neighbour's eye, it has the effect of taking away attention from the plank in your own."

Moreover, I have to imagine that these comparisons not only do nothing to solve problems, but they actually make citizens feel like they do not need to make the necessary changes to the national systems because they feel superior to their neighbour. I have personally seen this type of behaviour from other Canadians. In fact, Premier Ford's original comment seems to have been made in this spirit, as it was prefaced by "Good luck to them and hopefully they can straighten out their problems, and thank God that we're different from the United States."

At the end of the day, behind both countries' statistics and stories of racism are real people suffering. Having relatively fewer hate crimes means nothing when you are the one staring into the barrel. How dare anybody use these statistics to feel better about their country when even one person in it is facing discrimination based on race? ♦



The Notorious RBG

Jessica Khorana
POLITICS

Ruth Bader Ginsburg has held many titles over the course of her life. Supreme Court Justice. Law student. Professor. Mother. Wife. Daughter. But perhaps her most significant title that still resonates with us today is that of feminist icon. Ginsburg was a pioneer for gender equality, a trailblazer for equal rights, spending a majority of her life fighting for women everywhere.

As one of the nine women in a law class of five hundred, Ginsburg was no stranger to being pushed aside because of her gender. Despite her strong academic standing, her place at Harvard Law School was questioned by the Dean, who thought that she was taking a spot that should belong to a male student. While she was a professor at Rutgers School of Law, she hid her pregnancy by wearing oversized clothes in fear of her contract not being renewed.

My mother told me to be a lady. And for her, that meant be your own person, be independent.

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Even after managing to surpass the systemic barriers that every woman faces in our patriarchal society and after being appointed a judgeship in the Columbia circuit, her male colleagues were worried that she would be too preoccupied with her "motherly duties." These hardships that Ginsburg experienced reflect the experiences of many women. How many times has your authority been questioned, second-guessed because of your gender? How often have you been judged for choosing to pursue a career while raising children, being told that you were selfish for trying to have both a professional life and a family? How many times have your work and contributions been ignored, in favour of your male colleagues or classmates? How often have you been stereotyped, had assumptions made based on your gender before you were even able to speak? These experiences merely fueled Ginsburg's drive, and she accomplished so much in her eighty-seven years.

Not only did Ginsburg make advancements for her professional career, but she made strides for the equal rights movement as well. She was the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court, the first tenured female faculty member at Columbia Law School, and the first woman on the editorial staff at the Harvard Law Review. During her entire career, Ginsburg worked tirelessly to obliterate laws that discriminate based on gender. She created — as well as taught — numerous law courses on gender discrimination laws, was the founding council of the American Civil Liberties Union's (ACLU) Women's Rights Project, and authored multiple law review articles on gender discrimination, as well as Supreme Court briefs (most notably *Reed v. Reed*). Furthermore, she inspired generations of women through her refusal to be pushed aside and her determination to see a world in which men and women were viewed as equal.

Ginsburg served as a role model for generations of young women who were taught that they had to conform to the strict societal roles set out for them at birth. She inspired us to fight back when the world tried to suppress our voices, and because of her influence, there are little girls who dream about following in her

footsteps — who dream about changing the world. Her passing has significant repercussions for the future of both gender equality and the United States as a whole. Ginsburg's absence provides the opportunity for Republicans to sink their claws into the courts, as seen by President Trump's pathetic attempt to rush through the confirmation process of his own nominee this close to the presidential election. Aside from the obvious hypocrisy, this directly contradicts Ginsburg's wish: that she not be replaced until a new president is in power. If Trump succeeds and Amy Coney Barrett is appointed to the Supreme Court, it could undo all the work Ginsburg devoted her entire life to. Years of progress made in the legal fight for gender equality could be thrown down the drain, and Trump would solidify his control over the third branch of the government.

Moreover, Ginsburg's absence means that the chief justice no longer has a controlling vote in closely contested cases. If Barrett were to take Ginsburg's place, it could potentially create an impenetrable wall of conservatives to block out the voices of the American people. Furthermore, with Barrett, Kavanaugh, and Gorsuch on the bench, they could overturn *Roe v. Wade*. It's not only the issue of equal rights that is at stake — abortion, health care, gun laws, and immigration could all be impacted. It feels like a direct insult to Ginsburg, to not only deny her last wishes but to attempt to replace her with her ideological opposite.

Women are told that we are mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives. Women are told that we are nothing beyond these limited roles, and we are called selfish for trying to pursue something else. We are told to be happy with what little we are given and to not expect or take more. Ruth Bader Ginsburg refused to take this lying down — she spent almost her entire life advocating for women, suffering through personal tragedies and multiple health issues, but she persevered through it all because she knew that her work would make a difference. Despite her shy demeanour, she was as tough as nails, and she knew that she deserved better — that *all* women deserve better. While she may be gone now, her work is not over. We must continue the fight that she started; we owe it to Ginsburg, and we owe it to ourselves. ♦





Reviews



"She's A Peach": A Review of Ryan Murphy's *Ratched*

Robyn Bacon
ARTS AND CULTURE

Ryan Murphy's *Ratched* (2020) is a wicked and deliciously entertaining television show to watch. Both spooky and stylish, this series is reminiscent of a suspenseful Alfred Hitchcock film but includes an inherently feminine, queer, and malevolent perspective along with breathtaking costumes and colourful eye-popping visuals. Namely, the series is carried by a strong team of actresses that include Sarah Paulson, Judy Davis, Cynthia Nixon, Sophie Okonedo, and Sharon Stone.

Ratched is an imaginative origin story inspired by the character Nurse Mildred Ratched from the film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) that is based on the novel of the same name by Ken Kesey. Throughout the series, we see Nurse Mildred Ratched (Sarah Paulson) connive her way into becoming head nurse at the Lucia State Psychiatric Hospital in 1947 California.

The opening title sequence alone is simply gorgeous and worth watching. The interesting contrast between the scary themes and the gorgeous Technicolor-Esque cinematography makes the series look visually appealing at its surface but quickly reveals its disturbing themes. This duality in the series is most recognizable in the psychological characterization of protagonist Mildred Ratched. The series slowly reveals how the meticulously glamorous Mildred Ratched became so jaded and cruel toward her patients. This duality is perhaps perfectly embodied by a peach—a single peach that became the iconic visual motif of the series after a hostile scene between Mildred Ratched and Nurse Betsy Bucket. In this scene, Bucket threatens to eat Ratched's peach in the staff kitchen at the hospital, which Ratched claims is hers. After Bucket decides to eat it anyway, Ratched channels some unmatched menacing energy—and needless to say, she is not pleased. The metaphor of the peach directly relates to Mildred's psychology—appearing sweet on the outside with a dark, hard pit on the inside.

Ratched reminds audiences of the horrific and barbaric medical and mental health practices used in psychiatric care in the 1940s and onwards—some practices which unfortunately are still used today. Trigger warning for the series: procedures like lobotomies and different forms of gay conversion therapy are performed. This in turn is what makes the series so terrifying at its core as these psychiatric procedures are a huge part of human history, both past and present.

The series is reminiscent of *American Horror Story: Asylum* (2012), as this is not director Ryan Murphy's first time making a horror television show. He often casts the same actors and pushes the boundaries of the characters he creates to the utmost degree—and *Ratched* is no exception. These characters' motivations are strong, and they will do almost anything to get what they want, which is always fun to watch.

Ratched is not meant to be a truthful portrayal of the past, but rather an imaginative retelling of what could have happened. The series is by no means perfect, as a few characters in the series who suffer from an array of mental illnesses may be performative and potentially harmful to those who actually struggle with these illnesses today. Moreover, the ending—without spoiling it—is predictable and lends itself to the strong possibility of a second season. The first season wraps up in a way that is satisfying but still leaves room for more.

The strengths that *Ratched* exhibits as a television series lends itself to the genius departments of costuming, makeup, special effects, production design, art direction, and set decoration. So if you're craving something glamorous and spooky to watch this season, I recommend *Ratched*. ♦



Peyton Place

Innes Soggi
ARTS AND CULTURE

When it was first published in 1956, Grace Metalious' debut novel *Peyton Place* shocked the world. Deemed morally corrupting "trash," the book was banned in multiple cities and countries, including Canada. Nevertheless, the book remained on *The New York Times'* bestsellers list for fifty-nine weeks, gaining such notoriety that it eventually was adapted into not only a movie but a long running TV soap opera. What was it, then, that made a book about a small New England town so controversial?

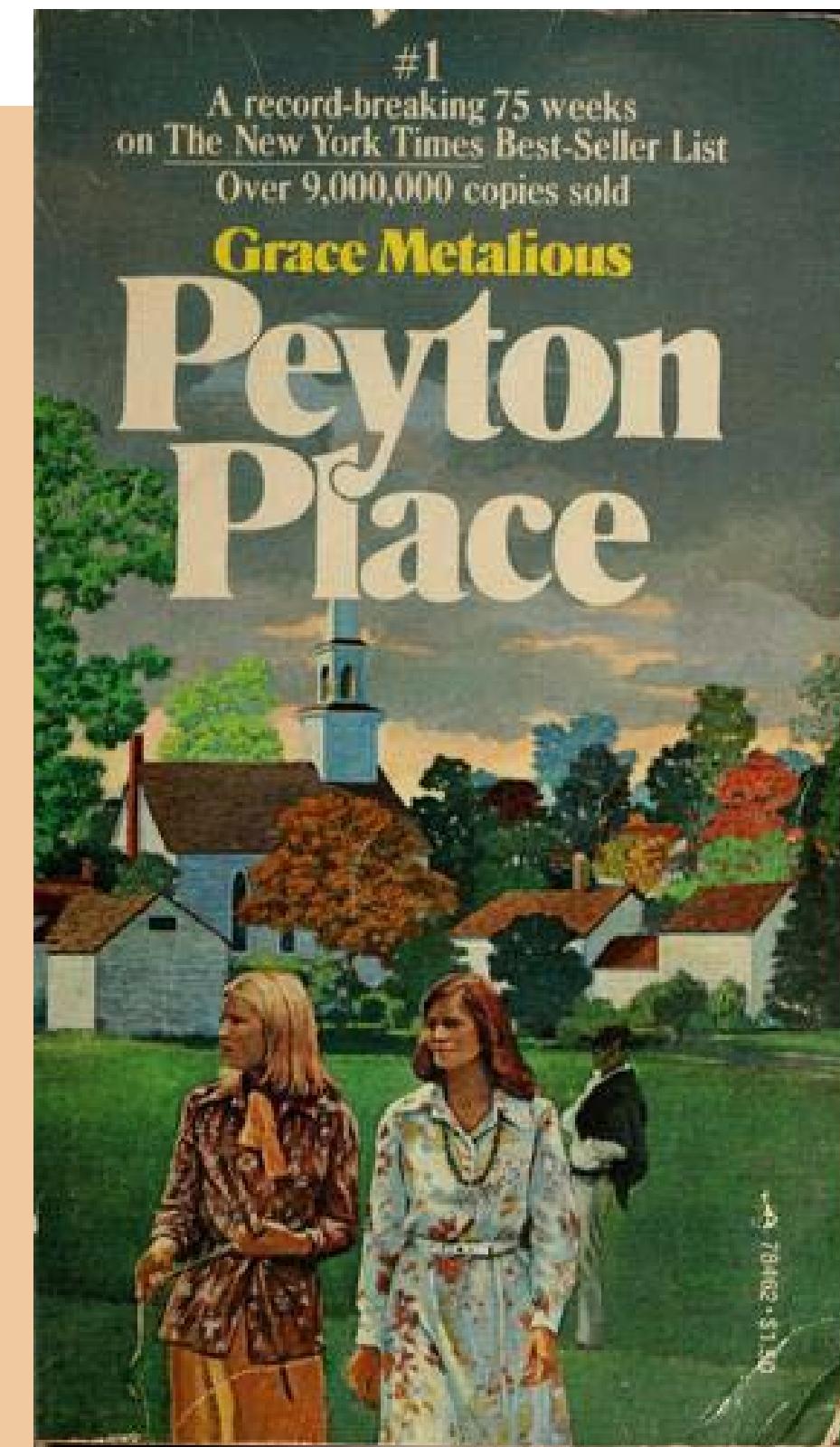
The story is remarkably simple. Set during World War II, the book follows the lives of three women – single mother Constance MacKenzie, her daughter Allison, and Allison's friend Selena Cross. Lonely and repressed, Constance's life is ruled by the fear that her past adulterous relationship will become known to her gossipy town. Meanwhile, her daughter Allison grapples with adolescence, straddling the line between following her mother's strict rules and desiring to explore her sexuality. Although going through a similar transition, Selena Cross is subjected to a much darker world than Allison – one where the sexual appetite of an older man threatens to ruin her life.

Through these three women, Metalious brings to the forefront taboo issues of 1950's society that are often swept under the rug. Along with detailing the social inequalities and class privilege running rampant in society at the time – and which continue to do so today – the book takes a hard and honest look at the issue of female sexuality, specifically, women as active sexual agents. The women of *Peyton Place* not only have sex, but they enjoy it. This perhaps sparked the most controversy. That is, it wasn't so much the sex itself, but it was the way in which Metalious celebrated female sexuality that was considered scandalous and uncouth. By dealing with related issues of domestic violence, rape, abortion, and adultery, Metalious unapologetically comments on the harsh realities society turned a blind eye to. In doing so, she rips apart the glossy image of moral, friendly, buttoned-up small town America to expose the harsh realities underneath.

Now, you might be wondering how a book that deals with such "unseemly" topics, written by a woman no less, even got published. At the time, there were only two female presidents of publishing companies. Kitty Messner, president of Julian Messner, and Helen Meyer, head of Dell Publishing. When Messner first read the manuscript, she, along with her almost entirely female staff, recognised its potential immediately. After signing a deal with Metalious, Messner enlisted the help of Meyer to actually print the book. It was specifically the book's progressive, blunt portrayal of taboo subjects that drew both women to the story. They knew that if they and their staff loved it, there was bound to be a market out there of readers who yearned for authenticity too. And they were right.

So, why should you read *Peyton Place*? For starters, you can't just watch the film or TV adaptation. Neither captures the spirit or social commentary. They either drastically change the material's controversies or remove them altogether to better suit conservative norms. More importantly though, it allows us to rethink the past. Yes, 1950's America had strict norms – a post-McCarthyism era of repression, denial, regulation, and hushed-whispers about 'improper' things. However, by reading Metalious' work, we can see that it wasn't just that. It was a time of change, of pushing boundaries, and bringing what was hidden into the light. Perhaps most simply, it's a good story told by a good storyteller. It has it all. Love. Loss. Sex. Murder. Scandal. What more could you ask for? ♦

1956 cover of *Peyton Place*. Photo Courtesy of Open Library, where [Peyton Place](#) can be borrowed and read for an hour.





Indigenous Language Revitalization

An Interview with Professor Ryan DeCaire

Shankhalika Srikanth

ARTS AND CULTURE

Out of more than 70 Indigenous languages spoken in Canada, only a handful still have a stable population of fluent speakers. Efforts to create new speakers of these languages, a process known as “language revitalization,” is an increasingly urgent priority. The importance of language revitalization is highlighted in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, as well as in Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Professor Ryan DeCaire, a second-language speaker of Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) who works with language revitalization efforts, talks about his language reclamation journey, why parents are the key to Indigenous language revitalization, how learning language requires “leaving your ego at the door,” and the need for non-Indigenous settlers to have some knowledge of local Indigenous languages.

Srikanth: Could you talk a little about your journey to becoming a second-language speaker of Kanien'kéha as an adult and what your motivations were?

DeCaire: Thanks for asking me that. I'd say it's not really that unique amongst Indigenous people or second-language learners who became “speakers”, as what it really required of me was to start learning as an adult. I didn't really start learning until I was about 20 years old. Where I grew up in Wáhta, which is really similar to other Mohawk communities, you do hear [the language] around, you see it on signs, you hear old people speaking it here and there, you pick up things like “hello” and “goodbye” and “one two three four”, other things that seem to stick out. But you never really develop this capacity to create with language and live in the language as a bilingual person. So I suppose when I was about 20, I only saw speakers that were in their 60s, 70s, and I just questioned why it was that way. It wasn't necessarily a moral calling or anything like that. It wasn't like I all of a sudden felt this great desire to change things — although I was motivated to change in the community. It just felt like something I had to do, and it wasn't until later where I started to realize how important language was to our community, and how important to individuals too.

So anyway, to make a long story short, I started learning as a 20-year-old. I started visiting elders in my community, recording them, and I didn't understand anything they said at all, but I just tried to do as much as I could. There wasn't anything available in my community for language learning, especially for adults. So I ended up moving away to another Mohawk community which is where

I am now, at Six Nations. Six Nations is one of the leaders in adult language learning and acquisition of an Indigenous language not only in Canada but throughout the world. [They] developed an adult immersion program called Onkwawén:na Kentyóhkwa. I took the program there and I was there for about 2 years. I became a pretty good speaker after that because it's a program that's basically all immersion: Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 3:30 a day, up to 2000 hours accumulated over two years.

After that, I moved away from Six Nations and I lived with first-language speakers in another Mohawk community called Kahnawà:ke. I lived my whole life from the moment I woke up to the moment I went to bed in the language, and I got away from English and taught the language in another immersion program in Kahnawà:ke.

Since then, that's what I've been doing: spending time with elders, doing documentation work, teaching at the university, and also teaching in the community in adult immersion in Six Nations. Now I'm a curriculum developer there. I also teach in their second-year program, and of course, as a professor at U of T.

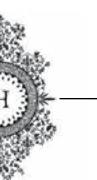
But both of those jobs are a little different. In the community, it's more about a specific goal of creating speakers; those adults can then have the capacity to restore intergenerational transmission by having children and creating first language speakers out of their children, or by becoming teachers in our elementary immersion schools. Whereas my job at U of T is two things: one is just talking about the nature of language revitalization, the other is teaching Mohawk, and that's more about this idea of creating good neighbours. We need to create a general understanding of Indigenous languages, especially [for] students getting an Indigenous Studies degree. Whether you're going to become a nurse or a lawyer, a farmer, an athlete, it doesn't matter what you're going to be; if you have knowledge of Indigenous languages within your local area, it's going to enable you to do that job better than if you hadn't.

People say, “Why should a Canadian learn an Indigenous language?” If you want to “reconcile” the past wrongs, we have to realize that the Canadian identity is built on a relationship with Indigenous people. Maybe you won't become fluent in these languages, or maybe you won't feel like you have a direct impact, but just having knowledge of it, and understanding that knowing some Mohawk is part of what it means to be Canadian, is certainly going to be a step forward in making things easier with revitalization and policy changes.

Srikanth: Do you think it's important to centre discussions around language revitalization in the context of colonialism (i.e. in explaining why languages need to be revitalized in the first place)?

DeCaire: I don't really think the focus should be on colonialism; I think that distracts us and keeps us down the road of thinking about us as dispossessed people and challenged people. I think the focus should be more on transformation and saying that there is still this opportunity for us to revitalized these languages. We don't want to be colonized people, we don't want that to be our identity; we want our identity to be Kanien'kéha:ka, separate from what happened to us, or what was done to us years ago, or what is still happening to us today.

The focus should be less on resisting and more on transforming our people to be resilient in an ever-changing world, and one way to do that is to focus on language revitalization. There's



research out there showing that when you learn your language, that's an indicator of cultural continuity, and when you understand your culture, you're more likely to feel part of a community; you're more likely to feel like you have responsibilities in the world and you're less likely to have mental health issues. We need more language practitioners and fewer social workers. [The thought is] that people revitalize a language, but really, it's a language that revitalizes a people.

When you engage in language revitalization, it's less about putting bandages on a problem and more trying to get to the foundations of why we're challenged.

At the end of the day what really brings us all together is our language, and that's an indicator of us as a separate identity

It's said that people revitalize a language, but really, it's a language that revitalizes a people — Prof. DeCaire

as Indigenous people connected to this land base. When you lose words, you lose the language, you lose a collective understanding of how to live within the cycles of this current land base that we exist on. It's one of the reasons why I'm so focused on language revitalization. It's great to be part of a community that speaks your language; it's so beautiful. It helps you to understand the worldview of your people right now and how it always has been. It also leads us to better social outcomes: people staying in the community, working in the community, and keeping jobs at home.

Photo courtesy of the Centre for Indigenous Studies



Srikanth: Do you have any advice for people who want to learn their language?

DeCaire: The best way is to not do it alone at the beginning. Language revitalization and language learning isn't an individual affair; it's a constant journey of humility where you're leaving your ego at the door. It's especially hard for Indigenous people in a class like the Mohawk language course at U of T. Certain years I've taught if you're Mohawk, you're less likely to do well in the class. The reason is usually that for Indigenous people learning their language, they bring to the classroom emotional and psychological baggage of feeling like they should know the language already. They grapple with the challenge of, “I have to admit that I don't know my language in front of a collection of students who aren't Mohawk.” It's really hard to admit that you don't know it; that's one of the biggest challenges you have to overcome as an Indigenous person who wants to learn the language.

You have to make time for learning the language; it's not something that can just be done every now and again. That doesn't mean you have to change your whole lifestyle and do everything exactly as I did to become a speaker and teacher; maybe you don't have that opportunity like I did. Just ensure that it's consistent studying and you're actually involved with other people who are trying to speak it as well so you don't feel alone. Because even though I say learning your Indigenous language is good for your mental health, sometimes it can have the opposite effect where you feel ostracized from society, that you're alone. You could easily fall into that, so you have to ensure you're with other people to help each other along in the process of learning the language. Recognize that it's a long process, that even most people who become really good speakers are still learning the language, and it's never going to end.

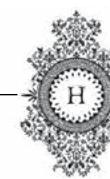
Srikanth: What needs to be implemented structurally to ensure that there is a process of creating new speakers?

DeCaire: What often happens is that, at times, language revitalization is superficial, or there's not enough required effort put towards it in order to revitalized the language. [For instance,] it might be nice to have signs of Anishinaabemowin or Mohawk in Toronto because they're a step forward in increasing knowledge and awareness about these languages. But if your goal is to revitalized a language, then you have to ask, what is a revitalized language? Usually, it requires two things: you have to have intergenerational transmission, and people have to actually speak it in a speech community. So if the goal is to recreate that, it doesn't really matter how many signs you have. If people aren't speaking it and passing it on to their children, then you're not reaching your goal.

Whether it be the macro level at the Canadian government level or micro level on reserve communities, there's not enough adequate funding put towards language revitalization. So if the goal is [to develop proficient speakers], then more of the money and focus and efforts need to go towards things like immersion programs.

Srikanth: It's clear that apps can't create speakers on their own, but do you think there's a space for digital solutions in the language revitalization process?

DeCaire: If it's actually effective, of course. Some of these things might seem that way, but they're not. Oftentimes, the resources we have at the community level are so small that maybe it's not the best practice to do certain things at this moment. *continue on next page...*



Often when people are engaging in language revitalization strategies, they're taking almost a one-size-fits-all approach; when in actuality, every language has different vitality, different ideologies in the community about the importance of the language, it has different funding available, and it exists within a different sociocultural experience.

Then the other question is, does the community have the capacity or the expertise to maintain such technologies? For example, we just developed a dictionary called Kawennón:nis with the National Research Council Canada with the expertise of computational linguists. But once they're gone, who will have the capacity to maintain the code and update it? If we don't have the funding, who's going to be able to do that? Whose intellectual property is it?

Srikanth: I can see why the one-size-fits-all approach wouldn't work so well when working with languages of different vitalities.

DeCaire: There are a lot of communities where only people over 60 years-old speak the language, so that's indicative of the fact that they all stopped speaking around the 1950s and 1940s, and that was the last peer group of speakers. That usually means that there was a higher incidence of attendance at residential schools and other social pressures at that time.

People think that the language is held by the elders, and then others will say "No, it's the children because they're the future." Well, really, what I would say is that it's the parents. Because it's parents that get their children to speak. So if the parents aren't highly proficient in the language, and their children go to an immersion school, it's going to become a school language for the kids, and when they come home it's not going to be a language of the family, it's not going to be a language of the community.

We should want to identify as people who use the language on an everyday basis. One indicator that your language isn't doing well, [is] if it's only being used as symbolic functions, like a sermon or a speech or a ceremony, and it's not being used to tell your kid to wash their hands better or to flush the toilet. Those are the real words you need to know. Those are indicative of a healthy language, not the special, fancy words in a speech.

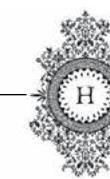
Srikanth: Where do you think the vitality of Kanien'kéha will be in the next few years?

DeCaire: It's hard to say, but what really has to happen is more second-language speakers need to be creating more first-language speakers.

Then the next goal would be to maintain a peer group of speakers. The biggest peer group, and most challenging, are pre-teens. When they start to become part of a more globalized world [with] people speaking English more often, it's not really the cool thing to [speak the language]. So that's the challenge there: how does the language stay cool, and how do people maintain it within their peer groups? The more speakers we get and encourage to stay within the community, to work in the community, and be part of that community of speakers, the better. ♦

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Ryan DeCaire is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Indigenous Studies and in the Department of Linguistics. He is Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) from Wáhta Mohawk Territory.



Disperse

Photo Essay: Abandoned Furniture

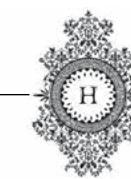
Sannie Chie
CREATIVE

The things you can find in someone's trash says a lot about them: receipts from where they shop, their preferred brand of toilet paper, or how often they order take-out. In particular, I want to focus on abandoned furniture; from the mattress you sleep on to the shelf you put your books on, furniture is something you assume will stay a permanent fixture in your home. However, for students living downtown, furniture is a hassle to purchase, to haul back from IKEA, and to store or get rid of at the end of the school year.

Moving off-campus last September, I encountered new mattresses being thrown out on my street at the end of every month; in other words, the end of every lease. In my neighbourhood, there was a graffiti artist who would paint images of a sleepy dude overnight before the mattresses were picked up, giving the mattresses one final friend before their demise in a landfill or incinerator. My own abandoned mattress last year did not receive this treatment, instead it was left in the care of a friend of a roommate after many fruitless Facebook Marketplace attempts to sell it off.

Now, back on the west coast riding out the pandemic, I have been an avid walker. Like the old grandmas in my suburb, I make it a point to enjoy and breathe in the fresh air, especially after the wildfires. Here in the suburbs, the furniture dispersed tells a different story. People in the suburbs are here for the long-haul, thus the furniture they grow out of is due to wear and tear or aging out, rather than the frantic post-exam abandonment of mattresses we see in Baldwin Village. Using some random film I had, I walked around and tried to capture as many items as I could. A few favourites that I took snapshots of include a white leather couch in the middle of a field, a child's Little Tike Coupe parallel-parked in the lawn, and a pair of chairs that blend into their environment. ♦





Compassionate Sustainability

Olivia Fraser
CLIMATE CHANGE

By now, with Greta Thunberg and the Fridays for Future movement, sustainable trends taking over social media, and nearly every political candidate making environmental promises, climate change and sustainability is hard to ignore. Or are they? Nearly the entire population of Canada and most of the world has social media of some sort or follows a news outlet and inevitably comes across climate issues like wildfires, hurricanes, pollution, extinction, and so on. Awareness is at an all-time high, but sometimes it feels like empathy for the environment is nonexistent, extinct like the many species that suffered from toxic human habits.

When passionately caring and fighting for the health of the environment, it can be so easy to drop the weight of climate change and sustainability into the lap of the individual, but it is just as toxic to blame singular persons for not working hard enough to better the earth. While it is important to be knowledgeable of how your actions can degrade or regenerate the Earth, it is just as important to recognize that corporations, who are the real source of pollution and global warming, need to adopt more sustainable practices in terms of production and disposal. It is great to be passionate about healing Mother Earth, but it is crucial that we do it together and be gentle with each other, rather than blaming one another for not doing enough. The reality is that consciousness and care are what truly matter. This means caring for ourselves and others, just as much as the trees and oceans.

The current capitalistic society that we live in thrives off convenience, off cheap production, off exploiting the land and people for wealth. Individual and collective apathy is what fuels the corporations that feed capitalism; ignorance allows us to move day-to-day without caring where our garbage goes or how to properly recycle and compost. Capitalism offers us a convenience culture that trains us to throw out and replace items that can be fixed or recycled in another way; it trains us to accumulate so much stuff with little care for it and to view everything as disposable. The encouraging thing is that there are many people currently thinking creatively and coming up with unique ways to be sustainable, such as



new methods of making plastic, recycling material, or even simple actions like Nova Scotia's plastic bag ban effective October 30th, 2020. Even though there is hope for sustainability, ignorance and inaction still prove to be dangerous enemies against shifting to a climate-conscious culture.

The good news is that ignorance can easily be battled with love, mindfulness, and compassion. I did not want to write yet another sustainability article that tells you to reduce, reuse, and recycle, no matter how true those practices are. Because I am sure we have all been told to compost, to buy less single-use plastics, to sort our recycling, to eat less meat and dairy because their methods of production pollute the land, to buy clothes and furniture second hand, to shut the lights off when they are not in use, to take public transit or cycle, to go to climate protests, to plant a garden, but have we ever been told that the true secret to healing this Earth that feeds, clothes, and houses us, is to care for her?

Look around you, feel the soft, loving grass and steady ground that supports your feet. Listen to the trees, they have voices too, voices that whisper sweet songs of home. Taste and feel the food that gives you life and energy each day. When was the last time you thanked your Mother? This Mother that warms your blood with a golden sun and

chills your bones with undefinable wind, the Mother that is alive just as I am. She is not here in existence for your convenience, she is here to live and thrive, to take care of you just as you should take care of her. And she is adapting with us, whenever we build a new cement building, she sprawls her chewing vines over its forehead. But her body can only adapt to so much before it goes silent, before the toxic sludge of modern society's convenient lifestyle seeps deep into her soils and spoils her harvest. Your house on some street in some city is not your home, Earth is your home. Just as each item in your house serves a purpose, so does everything on Earth, and it is cruel to take away many of her gifts just so humans can build another factory or make more money.

I am not saying that we should leave Mother Earth alone, that we should sever our ties with nature, for humans are a part of nature, and Earth needs us as we need her. However, it is unnatural for our species to consume so much of our Mother. We need to learn to have a healthy relationship with her, for there are many ways to live a high quality of life with comfort and safety in a sustainable way. That strong relationship is within reach if we adopt better caring practices, and stop prioritizing wealth and exploitation over the well-being of both Earth and humanity. ♦

Museum

Aria Pachal
POEM

My body is now a canvas
with painted scars and
corrugated skin
twisted strokes
that streak my
sides
where your hands
had once been.
Now unearthed
by your
unmoving gaze
my colours merge,
a deep crimson
surges into
the dwindling hues
that marks my manner.

Outline me with your thoughts
Scan me with a scathing sense
of pointed looks and
unappointed verdicts
scrutiny never felt so fitted.

You linger for a moment.
My breath halts as you
edge closer,
my flesh turning
almost prismatic
at the sound of your approach.

Please do not touch the artwork



Inspired by Carol Ann Duffy's *Standing Female Nude*, this poem describes what it must feel like to be a work of art on display. This poem was once a love letter to my experiences in art galleries where art was appreciated, honoured, and treated with the utmost respect. I could see pristine white spaces filled with light and mystery, hushed and holy. The visitor was as much a part of the installation as the artwork: a synergy of shared objectification. Now, when I reread the poem, the air is thick with the weight of judgement.

When I reread the poem, the air is thick with the weight of judgement. — Aria Pachal

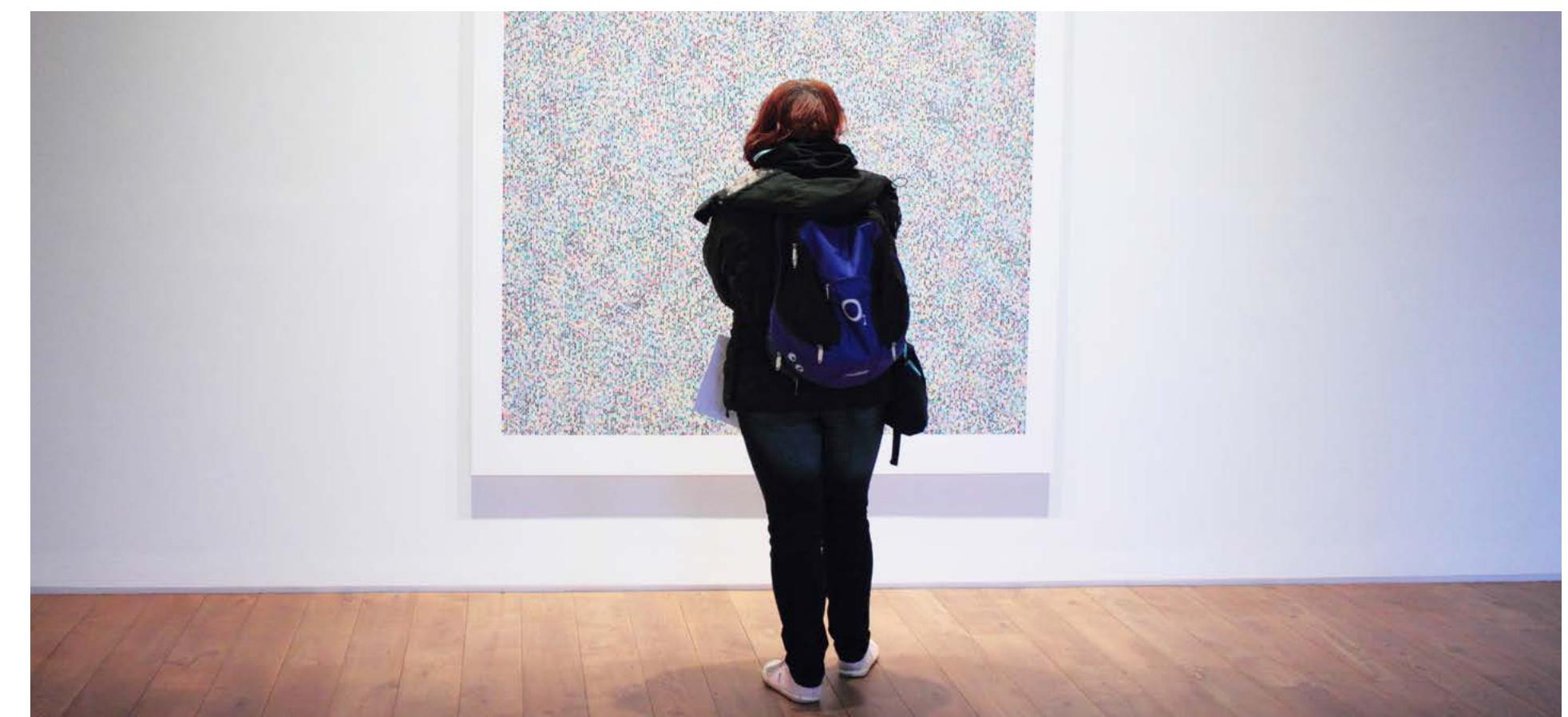
I feel the same discomfort when I'm walking alone after sunset, and I know this discomfort is universal. Women across the world are made to feel out-of-place in their own hometowns. We are overly vigilant, always trying to escape the pairs of eyes that constantly follow us. We have to stay a few steps ahead – no one wants to find out what will happen if we stop.

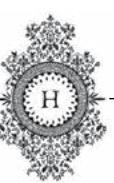
The objectification of women has become commonplace – its stories have moved away from the headlines and into the realm of the ordinary.

This article serves to highlight the horrors of society today; just recently, a 19-year-old Dalit girl was raped by multiple men. Correction: four upper-caste men brutally assaulted and gang-raped 19-year-old Manisha Valmiki from a marginalized caste in North India, and the police refused to file a complaint about the case. She was one of many.

The poem no longer relates to a privileged perspective. It represents the voices silenced behind whitewashed walls.

I cannot unsee it. I cannot un-feel it. ♦





The Moon

Cynthia Zheng
POEM



In the silence, the moon speaks

The moon is mischievous.

The moon likes to play hide-and-seek during the day, constantly sneaking out of your sight, but sometimes... you might just catch the moon lingering in the sky and grinning down at you in broad daylight.

The moon is benevolent.

The moon warms the night, constantly looking over you, but sometimes... when a little bit reticent, you might not see the moon hiding behind the thick clouds in plain darkness.

The moon understands...

when the city falls into a deep somber, when the noise inside becomes louder than the outside, when what you are searching for becomes a question mark.

The moon listens...

to your worries, your dreams, your stories. All the traces you intentionally leave behind, hoping to be seen, hoping to be heard, hoping for a friend to say, "I understand."

You are never alone with the moon by your side.

So please, don't forget to look up at the sky... because even for the times when you can't see the moon, the moon can see you.

You are seen.

You are heard. The moon is a friend, and the moon understands. ♦

Top 10 Quarantine Hobbies

Robyn Bacon
SATIRE

1. Getting Pregnant

If there is anything that couples have been doing during quarantine... It is getting pregnant. I guess a global health crisis makes people horny? Who knows... but all I know is that people in my life—as well as countless celebrities in Hollywood like Gigi Hadid, Emma Roberts, and Ashley Tisdale—have been announcing that they are either expecting a child or have recently given birth to a fresh new baby.

It is strange to me that couples—primarily heterosexual couples—would want to have a baby during this time, considering that COVID-19 has recently surpassed a death toll of one million worldwide. On top of that, forest fires are spreading rapidly in California and South America, capitalist society is crumbling under an economy debilitated by COVID, and racism remains another virus that needs to be eradicated. The future is bleak and more uncertain than ever...perhaps this is the result of couples getting bored and running out of hobbies entirely?

On the other hand, babies are a symbol of hope, and many couples have had plans to conceive a child before the COVID-19 quarantine. While I offer a big congratulations to all who are expecting, I ask all couples to stop having gender reveal parties that could add to the California forest fires.

2. Binge watching the same film and television shows

We all have that one film or television show that we have seen ten times but never get sick of. More digital content is being consumed than ever before due to quarantine and during these "unprecedented times"—a phrase that I am beginning to despise. It is emotionally comforting to watch something that feels very "precedented."

Speaking personally, the one piece of content that I can watch repeatedly is NBC's iconic mockumentary comedy series The Office (2005 – 2013). I can confidently say that I have watched this

television series at least fifteen times, and no doubt there will be more times to come.

There are a few articles that unpack why people like rewatching The Office. One article from Bustle details that viewers who have seen something before find comfort when they know what is going to happen in the plot—and that creates a sense of familiarity. Familiarity is attributed to likeness and can reduce feelings of anxiousness, promoting feelings of relaxation.

3. Saving money on TTC fare

If there is one thing I have not missed during this pandemic, it is the Toronto Transit Commission: an infamous transit system that is always delayed and always under construction.

During COVID-19, I have roughly saved \$160.00 a month on TTC fare. Before COVID-19, I was commuting to school, work, and social functions almost every day. While I will eventually begin riding the TTC again, I do not miss breathing the stale, metallic-flavoured air of a cramped subway car at 8am rush hour. After seeing how dirty public transportation truly is, I feel comfortable with never riding it again. I have seen people puke on the bus and dogs shit on subway platforms; I have seen men exhibit predatory behaviour toward women on public transit. A variety of uncleanly experiences, to say the least.

After not riding the TTC daily for eight months and counting, I realize how much I love being above ground where I can see trees and get proper cell phone reception.

4. Bike riding

Enjoying the remainder of the autumn season outside is essential for mental health. So if you do not own a bicycle—fear not! Bike Share Toronto is here for you. You can ride around the city for a small fee and have them decline your credit card when the tap does not work. Remember, if there is anything that will stop the spread of COVID-19, it is sharing bikes with total strangers who have ridden them with sweaty crotches.

5. House projects

The pressure of heteronormative masculinity has made every father think he is Bob the Builder. Maybe he is renovating the bathroom for the third time in six months regardless of whether or not he actually possesses the skills to do so. Maybe your mother's new hobby of interior design has gotten out of control? Maybe you have rearranged your bedroom for the fifth time?

Autumn is the prime season for house

projects, whether it is painting your basement bubble gum pink (like me), or building a treehouse for your kids that will eventually have a family of raccoons living in it in no time (like my neighbour).

6. Job hunting

If there is one thing that I have been doing the most since quarantine, it is job hunting. It turns out trying to get a job during the worst economic crisis since World War II is difficult. I mean, how draining is it to continually write two-page cover letters and forward references only to get rejected via email three weeks after an interview? People talk about being ghosted on dates, but I have been ghosted more on job interviews. So, enjoy the convenience of getting rejected from a job online instead of in-person.

7. Not going to the gym

COVID-19—the perfect excuse for not going to the gym, even though you were not planning on going anyway. COVID-19 outbreaks are especially likely in gyms where heaving breathing, sweaty equipment, and masks are allowed to be taken off when performing an exercise.

8. Finally booking your Driver's Test

Congratulations! You finally booked your Driver's Test—and now you have to wait six months to take it. I recently booked my Driver's Test, but according to the waitlist, so did everyone else in Toronto. I booked mine in early September 2020, and the earliest appointment I could get was January 2021. The waitlist is long, and city folk have been pressured by their small-town family members to get their license for so long. Now is the chance to get it and never have to ride a cramped subway car again!

9. Halloween

The only convenience about COVID-19 is that you do not have to buy a Halloween "mask" this year. You have plenty of choices for which mask wearing character you want to dress up as. You have Michael Myers, Darth Vader, Jason Voorhees, Spiderman, or Deadpool. Plenty of costume ideas for Halloween 2020. Just remember to wear your mask while you are shopping for a mask.

10. Conquering the task of chewing mint gum while wearing your mask

Popping a minty, fresh piece of Excel WinterFresh gum in your mouth and heading out to run errands that require a mask is a tough balance. The first minty, fresh breath you exhale will make your eyes water as if your eyeballs were the ones being brushed instead of your teeth. If you wear glasses, be mindful that your eyes may be affected more intensely due to the confines of your lenses. ♦



Burger and a Movie

Innes Seggie
RECIPE

I don't know about you, but when school is in full swing, my cooking abilities take a serious hit because, let's face it, who has time to cook when you've got a million assignments due? Don't worry! Over lockdown, I tested the best recipes requiring minimal effort for maximum taste. Through this quest, I discovered the best black-bean burger recipe out there. These burgers are healthy, quick, and easy to make; they also freeze for up to 3 months!

If you have the time, why not add a milkshake and a movie to your meal for a stress-buster evening – a treat we all need come midterm time!

Who says you need a blender to make a milkshake? Just grab a sturdy jar with a lid and put in about 1 1/2 cups of ice cream. You want the ice cream soft, so either leave it out for a bit or microwave for 15-30 seconds. Throw in 1/2 - 3/4 cup of milk, screw on the lid, and shake until well mixed! Now you're ready for the perfect movie to go with your diner-esque meal! I'd highly recommend George Lucas' 1973 *American Graffiti*. Equipped with your delicious burger and shake, sit back and escape into the past, where teenagers cruised the streets in cool cars and waitresses on roller skates served you at the drive-in! ♦



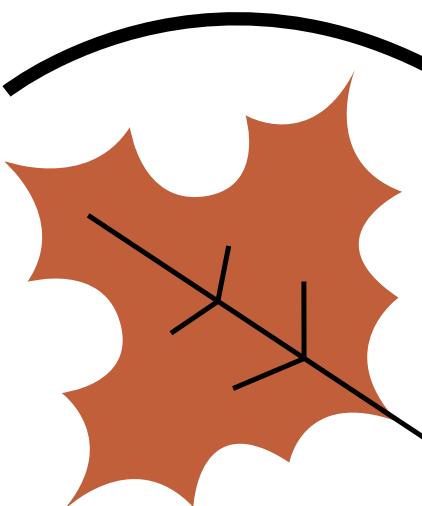
Ingredients (6-7 patties)

- 2 14 ounce cans of black beans, drained and patted dry
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 large onion, finely chopped
- 3 minced garlic cloves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup feta cheese
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons mayo
- Pinch of salt and pepper
- Buns and your favourite toppings

Directions

- Preheat your oven to 325°F. Pour the beans onto a lined tray, making sure to spread them out, and bake for about 15 minutes. The beans should be slightly dried out, but not completely!
- Once your beans are baked, increase the oven's temperature to 375 °F.
- While they bake, throw your oil, onion, garlic, and pepper into a pan and cook over a medium heat for about 5 minutes (or until soft). When done, use a paper towel to blot the moisture out.
- In a big bowl, mix together the remaining ingredients. Once baked, toss in the beans and mash them into the mixture with a fork. I've found that it's best to leave some large chunks of beans rather than mashing them in completely.
- Next, form your mixture into patties. About 1/3 cup for each should do, but it's up to you. Just remember, the bigger they are, the more unevenly they'll cook!
- Now to cook! Place your patties on a tray lined with parchment paper (a true Godsend). Bake for 10 minutes on each side.
- When done, top with cheese, tomatoes, guacamole, mustard, kale, red onions – the sky's the limit, so get creative!

comfort



Ingredients (pie filling)

- 3 large eggs (room temperature)
- 2 cups of pure pumpkin purée (canned)
- 1/2 cup whipping cream or full fat milk or 2% milk (room temperature)
- 1/2 cup of brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/8 teaspoon of grated nutmeg

Or substitute cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg for 2 teaspoons of pumpkin pie allspice.

Directions

Preparation

- Make sure you have measuring cups, spoons, a whisk or spatula, and a bowl for mixing ingredients.
- Have your pie crust made/ready before the pumpkin pie filling.

- Get a large bowl and mix ingredients together, starting with the eggs.
- Pour pumpkin pie filling into the pie shell.
- Put in the oven for 40–50 minutes at 350°F, until pie is set.
- To test if complete, insert a knife into the pie filling. Your knife should come out somewhat clean!
- Allow your pumpkin pie to cool down for approximately an hour before serving.

EXTRA-NESS (additions for serving)

- Top with whipped cream and a dust of cinnamon on top
- Serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream on the side
- Garnish the pumpkin pie with walnuts



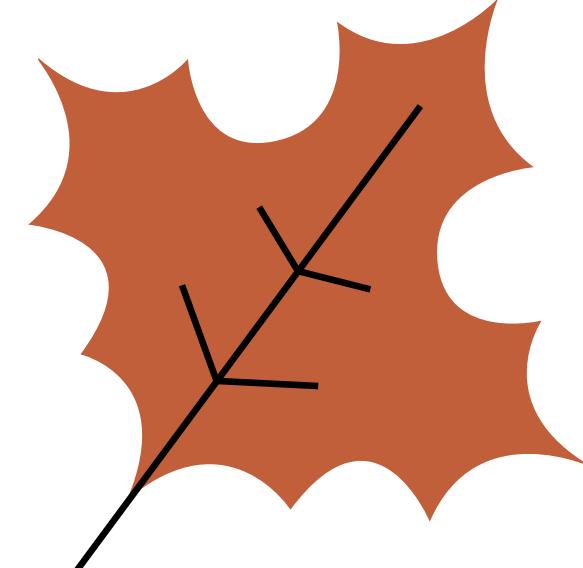
Dive into autumn with this homemade pumpkin pie recipe! Photo courtesy of Jasmine Kara

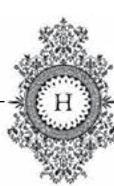
Thankful for Pumpkin Pie

Jasmine Kara
RECIPE

Drop the pumpkin spice lattes, it's time to make some pie! Who doesn't like pie? Because I sure do! As the leaves outside change colours and the spookiness of Halloween approaches, this pumpkin pie recipe will help fulfill this season's checklist! Whether this is for yourself, family or friends, anyone can enjoy this homemade pumpkin pie recipe.

Making this delicious pumpkin pie is a nice way to de-stress during these challenging times. This recipe is easy to make — especially the pumpkin pie filling. You can buy an already made pie crust from the store or make it from scratch. It's time to illuminate your taste buds this festive season with this delicious homemade pumpkin pie! ♦





on/offline

Sannie Chie PLAYLIST

Every song that I have been especially drawn to during the pandemic can be sorted through the dichotomy of being ON/ OFFLINE. The pandemic has both made the virtual world our everyday reality and given us the opportunity to connect with our local environments. These are songs with themes of our natural world and songs that tap into the hyperreal. This playlist is about the tug of war between wanting to drop off the face of the earth and run away to the woods and embracing internet culture to the fullest. In other words, I wanted to put Phoebe Bridgers in the same playlist as 100 geeks. ♦



Everywhere - 2017 Remaster
Fleetwood Mac



Mother Earth
Deem Spencer



I Want You To Love Me
Fiona Apple



IDORU
Grimes



stupid horse
100 geeks, Laura Les,
Dylan Brady

Photos courtesy of Spotify. You can listen to this playlist on Spotify!



On + Off
Maggie Rogers



Oh, What A World
Kacey Musgraves



Fruit
ABBA



forever
Charlie XCX



Is It Cold In The Water?
SOPHIE



I Know The End
Phoebe Bridgers



IPHONE
Rico Nasty

social distance: A Quarantine Inspired Playlist

Josie Meza-Silva PLAYLIST

With midterm season right around the corner, and in the midst of a global pandemic, this school year is definitely not typical for most, and that's saying the least. Being an off-campus student, I can't help but feel lonely at times. Especially on those late nights, writing essays in bed instead of pretending to write them at Robarts. This playlist was made with lots of vibrant songs that make being a university student in the middle of a global pandemic a lot less lonely and a lot more fun! This playlist is exactly perfect for the adrenaline rush you get after submitting an assignment to Quercus at 11:59 pm, making you want to burst out into a full movie-like dance montage in your living room. Hopefully if you are dancing at midnight, listening to this playlist, you aren't waking up sleeping roommates! Happy listening! :)

You can find [this playlist on Spotify](#) and stream for free, or sign up for a premium account at a discounted student rate of \$4.99 CAD/mo! ♦

Ungodly Hour
Chloe x Halle

U KNOW ME
COBRAH

Raingurl
Yaeji

KLINK
Smino

Free Room (feat. Appleby)
Ravyn Lenae, Appleby

Dang! (feat. Anderson .Paak)
Mac Miller, Anderson .Paak

DYSFUNCTIONAL
KAYTRANADA, VanJess

Fall in Love (feat. Ciscero)
GoldLink, Ciscero

Come Inside
Lou Phelps, Jazz Cartier

Girls That Dance
Masego, Medasin

Funny Thing
Thundercat

Freelance
Toro y Moi

Passionfruit
Drake

Borderline
Tame Impala

Ordinary Pleasure
Toro y Moi

Everything Now
Arcade Fire

Binz
Solange

Gone
Charli XCX, Christine and the Queens

BEST INTEREST
Tyler, The Creator

Hopscotch
Tinashe

Sunflower (feat. Steve Lacy)
Vampire Weekend, Steve Lacy

Supalonely
BENEE, Gus Dapperton

Freedom is Free
Chicano Batman

BOY BYE
BROCKHAMPTON

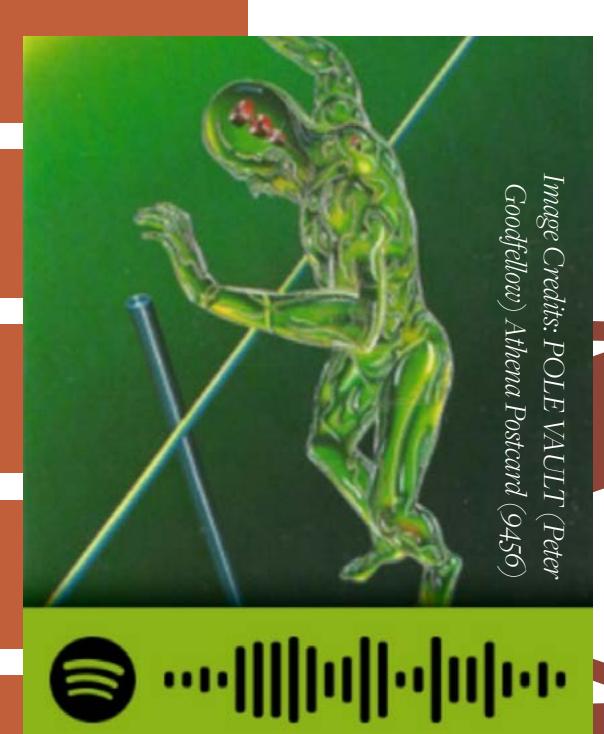
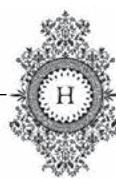


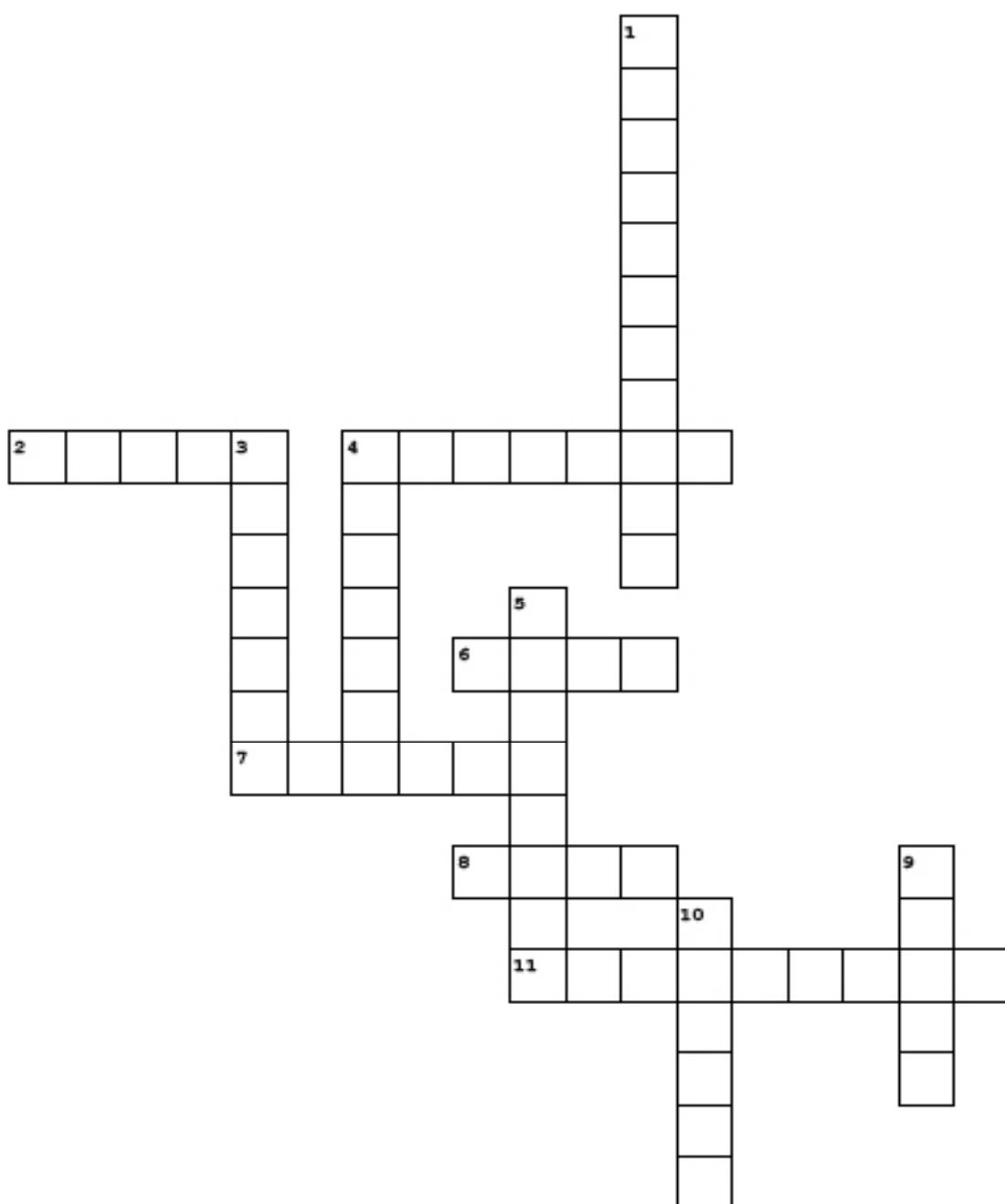
Image Credits: POLE VAULT (Peter Goodfellow) Athena Postcard (945)





CROSSWORD

Courtesy of the Innis Herald



Across

- 2. To overthrow something
- 4. Could be an insult or a bird
- 6. the feeling of a low temperature
- 7. the current season
- 8. A good food for a cold day
- 11. Looking at events through the eyes of the past

Down

- 1. See-through
- 3. Type of spice
- 4. A pastime similar to knitting
- 5. The centre of a city
- 9. A flower that is usually white and symbolizes purity
- 10. Similar to taking a walk

SUDOKU

Courtesy of Puzzles.ca

Easy

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 6 | | 5 | 7 | 3 | 8 |
| 7 | 3 | | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | 2 | |
| 9 | | | | | | |
| | 5 | | 8 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| 2 | | | | | 5 | |
| | 8 | | | | | |
| 1 | | 4 | 3 | | 2 | |
| | | | 1 | 6 | 8 | |

Medium

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 2 | | 6 | 3 |
| 1 | | 7 | | 9 |
| | | | | 4 |
| 9 | | 4 | | |
| 6 | | | 8 | |
| | 5 | | 6 | |
| 8 | | 4 | 7 | 2 |
| | | 2 | | 9 |
| 5 | | | | |

Hard

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | | 1 | |
| 7 | 5 | 1 | | 6 |
| 6 | | | | 3 |
| | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | | | 4 | |
| 7 | | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 9 | | 8 | 7 | |
| 5 | 6 | | 9 | 2 |
| | | | 4 | |

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We are committed to covering stories that matter to students. Our content aims to help students connect to their college, campus, city, and world.

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